VISIT…

An Introduction to Japanese Syntax, Grammar and Language

6th draft revision- 30 October 2006

A disclaimer of sorts

This book is still a draft version, meaning that while I have invested a lot of time in trying to make sure the information contained in it is correct, I cannot make any guarantees – I am after all just as fallible as any other author. While I accept full responsibility for the content of this book, I disclaim any responsibility for what you do with that content, or the result this might have on your life (such as a low, or high, grade on your homework, the loss of your job, or the accidental marriage to someone Japanese). You are free to quote from this book as long as you observe proper quoting conduct – this differs depending on the medium you are quoting in, but keep it civil. Do not copy entire sections verbatim or paraphrased (though I have less issues with paraphrasing than verbatim copies of course) if you have the ability to refer to this book instead, which if you're quoting you do.

This book is still pending a final editorial review and will not be released in final form until I and my peers are convinced this work is of sufficient quality to act as educational material for people interested in learning Japanese grammar.

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Preface

I started learning Japanese by watching cartoons. Come to think of it, that's kind of how I started learning English too, but the difference is that I started learning English when I started watching cartoons - which is when I was very young - whereas I started learning Japanese when I was in my third year of University. I am someone who relies on the internet to a large degree for finding information, so when I realised I was actually interested in learning the language that was used in these cartoons (or to say it properly, anime) I was watching, I took to the net to see if I could find some online lessons to help me on my way. This was in 2001 and to my great surprise there weren't really any sites at all that taught Japanese in a way that didn't involve learning one sentence per lesson, taught by anime characters in the setting of the show their example phrases were lifted from. Don't get me wrong, I love anime. I love a lot of other cartoons too, as well as regular tv shows and movies, but that doesn't make any of them a good source when it comes to seriously learning a language. The type of Japanese used in these shows, I knew, was not exactly the kind you'd typically use in real life, and so I ended up buying a book on the subject instead.

I bought the book "Nakama" (which, amusingly, doesn't contain the translation for this word in volumes 1 or 2) on impulse while browsing through the meagre Japanese section in the local huge book store "Donner" in Rotterdam, and only after having bought it did I realise I had made the right choice. It systematically but pleasantly explained Japanese in all its wondrous forms, and did something else; it made me realise that the languages I was used to were just some of the many ways in which a language could be formed. I had been so used to grammars that sort of seemed alike, having had Dutch, English, French and German, that reading and learning this new one was like a revelation. This language was so radically different that I had no choice but to accept that there were probably no fixed patterns that every language shared.

After a year had passed and I had devoured the first book, I bought the second book and started working through it, but something was bugging me. It seemed like some fundamentals were missing. There was a logic to how to conjugate verbs, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Again rather on impulse, I decided to sign up for classes in Japanese at the Leiden University, to see if I could put my learning into higher gear, as well as benefit from actual other people to practice with, but what I found in addition was something that my mind had been longing for in the material I had been using - proper structure.

At the university, we were taught the basics of the Japanese language, in the way the Japanese described it. I had a decent knowledge of how to say things in Japanese by then, but suddenly I was learning why the things I knew to use, should be used. I was taught that verbs had inflectional bases, that they had

specific roles and how to form constructions that did what we wanted them to do, using rules that started at the smallest blocks and worked from there, rather than starting at a masu form and working backwards to the verb base first. I learned how, in order to properly use Japanese, you had to let go of the idea that there were one on one translations between languages, and start at the beginning again. I learned something very important there, namely "This is why certain expressions exist, and this is how they fall apart grammatically".

I was quite thrilled to learn that simple things like "arigatou" and "sumimasen" were real words, besides being expressions, that had an etymology that entirely explained when and why you'd use them. I took lots of notes and happily learnt whatever they could throw at me. In fact, university had completely made me forget that the internet had failed me in my initial quest for knowledge until I was riding the train home one day with a Chinese exchange student who complained that the grammar material was in Dutch, and that she couldn't follow the grammar classes because there was no English material available. Being a computer savvy person, or in more concise terms somewhat of a nerd, I told her I would put my notes online, which were in English anyway, so that even if she couldn't go to grammar classes she might still benefit from them. This collection of online notes grew and grew until I realised I had amassed exactly the information I had been looking for years ago myself...

It was at this point that what was to become nihongoresources.com was born. I topicised the grammar notes, and after talking to a friend about how cool it would be to have a dictionary text file, discovered that this already existed in the form of Edict, and it was free! Without hesitation, I wrote a small script that would let me browse it and stuffed it online too, and suddenly had a website that - while infantile - actually catered to the needs of many students I went to class with. What had started as a small service to a fellow student had turned into something every student could benefit from, and with this motivation I started to expand the site, adding small bits here and there, pruning sections, and slowly building somewhat of a monster called "nihongo resources" with the appropriate domain name, comprising multiple dictionaries, grammar, lessons, and other resources. I even started writing a book on the Japanese grammar at the start of my second year Japanese in university.

But, I have to admit, I was a bit overzealous. While I enjoyed learning and through the process of explaining things to others, learnt things myself too, I was still a first year student with not exactly a lot of weight or experience under my belt. The first version of my book I offered to my teacher to scrutinise, and scrutinise he did. In retrospect, it's a good thing he did, because it took forever to get from the draft version to an edited final version. Instead, in 2005 I decided that the information I was offering the world was somewhat out of date, and needed a rewrite. I also knew that I had to do something with the book - I had promissed many people by now I would finish it and I didn't like the idea of letting those people down. As such, I began to write what you are reading now. A proper reader on the Japanese language in terms of syntax, grammar and

language constructions, free for use by students and people who do self-study - a reader for people who like me turned to the internet for help but, unlike me, actually found it.

To students who use this reader, I would like to say that I hope this aids you in your studies - this thing was written for you.

Michiel Kamermans, November 2005

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1. Japanese syntax and structure

1.1. The syntax

Syntax is what makes up the written language. English is made up of words written in roman script with spacing and interpunction, Japanese is slightly more complex, using three scripts: one that is used primarily for semantics and two that are used primarily for auxiliary writing. Japanese also has interpunction, but it lacks spaces, which makes the need for semantic script quite apparent as will be explained in the section on kanji.

1.1.1. "rōmaji"

Before we look at syntax, let's first look at what is not Japanese syntax: rōmaji (sometimes spelled ro-maji, roomaji or romaji), or ローマ字 as it is spelled in Japanese, with ローマ meaning Rome, and 字 meaning character(s). The most important thing to realise is that rōmaji is not Japanese. It's a transliteration of an aspect of Japanese into a western writing system. While this sounds useful, because it means Japanese can thus be written in western letters, this is a false assumption, because of the fact that rōmaji only captures one aspect of the language per rōmaji scheme chosen.

We can distinguish two main types of rōmaji, namely the phonetic transliteration, and the syntactic transliteration schemes. The first tries to mimic what Japanese sounds like to the western ear, and the most well known of these schemes is the "Hepburn" scheme. The second tries to mimic the order that is found in the kana tables and the most faithful of these is the "kunrei" scheme.

If we look at the differences, they are rather striking:

Japanese	その話は普通じゃないと思いますよ。
pure sound script	そのはなしはふつうじゃないとおもいますよ。
phonetic rōmaji	sono hanashi wa futsuu janai to omoimasu yo.
syntactic rōmaji	sono hanasi ha futuu zyanai to omoimasu yo.

The first rōmaji scheme can only (to a degree) accurately reflect the pronunciation of Japanese, thus making it easy to read as the reader's brain can instantly turn the words into internally vocalised words. The second rōmaji can only (to a degree) accurately reflect what the kana is supposed to look like, but is hard to read because what is written and how it should be internally vocalised are two completely different things: both versions of rōmaji are pronounced the same as the original Japanese.

The question then becomes which scheme to use in what setting. When one wants to simply get the Japanese across, using a phonetic romanisation scheme is the best approach, as people will not have to exert effort to understand you; it's just like reading their own language, except the letters spell out Japanese

words now. When, on the other hand, one wants to show syntactical correctness, such as in a learning setting, or when one doesn't know the language for which one is romanising, syntactic rōmaji should be used.

But there is a problem here - why use rōmaji to teach Japanese, when one can use Japanese script instead? Learning the kana is not something that will take months, if one will be studying Japanese anyway. It takes about a week to memorise hiragana to a level that continued practice (which is what someone who's studying will be doing anyway) and exposure to Japanese texts will perfect for you, even if you don't really try.

The question then becomes "who are these rōmaji schemes for?" The answer to this question is remarkably simple, actually. Phonetic romanisation, such as Hepburn and the like, are intended for non-Japanese people who understand the Roman alphabet. Different countries might have different schemes (for instance, the German 'j' is pronounced the same as the English 'y', so the romanisation 'ja' might mean something different in Germany than it does in English speaking countries), but the idea is that the phonetic scheme lets non-Japanese readers understand written "Japanese" easily without having to know how to read real Japanese to make sense of it. The syntactic scheme is actually intended for Japanese who need to write their Japanese in western letters, such as in international material, without having to actually be intimately familiar with which western language in particular they are romanising for.

The third category of people that might need rōmaji, people who want to learn Japanese, don't actually need rōmaji at all. Ideally, students should never be exposed to rōmaji at all in their educational material, save when the pronunciation for the kana is explained. However, when it is used, it should be remembered that students will understand that Japanese written in western letters does not accurately reflect the way it is written in Japanese. In this setting it makes most sense to use a rōmaji that's easy on the eyes rather than being an artificial alphabet that isn't read the way it is written.

That said, this reader will contain some phonetic rōmaji in the outline of Japanese, but will not use rōmaji in the sections concerned with actually teaching the language in terms of grammar, construction and phrases.

1.1.2. The kana

1.1.2.1. The scripts

Japanese has three scripts - kanji, hiragana and katakana. Kanji is used for semantics, while hiragana and katakana are sound scripts, used to indicate verb inflections, particles and simple words for which kanji are not required, or suitable.

The kana are two writing systems both denoting the same thing - a set of 46 individual syllables that can be arranged in a table called the gojuuon, 五十音(ごじゅうおん), meaning "the 50 sounds" after the classical table that contained 50 sounds. The following table of Japanese syllabaries is necessarily in western letters, because the alternative is to place consonants above the columns, and vowels on the rows, and writing the intersections in Japanese. This approach makes people think that there are such sounds as "tu" or "si", which in fact do not exist.

n/m/ng	wa	ra	ya	ma	ha	na	ta	sa	ka	a
		ri		mi	hi	ni	chi	shi	ki	i
		ru	yu	mu	hu/fu	nu	tsu	su	ku	u
		re		me	he	ne	te	se	ke	e
	(w)o	ro	yo	mo	ho	no	to	so	ko	o

the romanised kana

ん	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ
		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う
		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お

the hiragana script

ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア
		リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ
		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ
		レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ
	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ

the katakana script

These tables have a few things that may mislead people who see them the first time. Things to be aware of are that, while romanised with an r, the Japanese ら-column sounds are not actually an r, this is merely a romanisation convention. In reality, these sounds have a consonant that can be pronounced anywhere from a soft "r", to a normal "l" to a mix form of r/l/d. This makes hearing the consonant for people who are not familiar with it sometimes plain impossible, as their ears simply cannot distinguish it (yet) from for instance the real 'd' in Japanese.

Furthermore, the ふ / フ sound actually has a "consonant" that doesn't exist in many western languages. It's a sound produced using the diaphragm, something that in western language is typically reserved for breathing rather than speech. ひ/ヒ has a consonant not unlike the "ch" in the German word "ich", and the Japanese う sound can be anywhere between the Italian "u" and the German "u"

(which are quite different). Finally, the ん/ン is a nasal sound that can be either an "n", an "m" or an "ng" depending on where it is located in a word: when preceding a わ-, ら-, や-, は-, な-, た-, だ-, さ- or あ-column syllable, the pronunciation is an "n". When preceding a ま-, ば- or ぱ-column syllable, the pronunciation is "m", and when preceding a か- or が-column syllable, the pronunciation is "ng". Finally, when a word ends on ん, the pronunciation can range from an "n" to a mix between "n" and "ng".

1.1.2.2. Voicing

Voicing in Japanese kana is done using a diacritic called the dakuten, ゛, which is placed in the upper right area of the syllables:

romanised voicing

ba	da	za	ga
bi	dji	ji	gi
bu	dzu	zu	gu
be	de	ze	ge
bo	do	zo	go

voicing in hiragana

ば	だ	ざ	が
び	じ	じ	ぎ
ぶ	ず	ず	ぐ
べ	で	ぜ	げ
ぼ	ど	ぞ	ご

voicing in katakana

バ	ダ	ザ	ガ
ビ	ジ	ジ	ギ
ブ	ズ	ズ	グ
ベ	デ	ゼ	ゲ
ボ	ド	ゾ	ゴ

Now, as the Japanese ministry of education determined that not enough people could distinguish between the ぢ and じ, and づ and ず syllables, they officially replaced the normal ぢ with じ and づ with ず. This can lead to some confusion in for instance voiced kanji - kanji whose pronunciation changes when they're used in compounds, such as 片付く, which is kata + tsuku, but turns into katadzuku when combined into one word (more on this in the kanji section).

Finally, the secondary voicing to turn "h" into "p" is done using a diacritic called the handakuten, ゜, which is also placed in the upper right area of the syllables: ぱ, ぴ, ぷ, ぺ, ぽ for hiragana and パ, ピ, プ, ペ, ポ for katakana.

1.1.2.3. Glides

While this covers the basic sounds, it does not cover glide sounds. Things such as "nya" or "kyo" are not covered by single syllables, and are created using a combination of the い-row consonant sounds, paired with a half-size や, ゆ or よ for the glide sound. For instance, きや is "kiya", but きゃ is "kya".

1.1.2.4. Long vowels

Long vowel sounds differ for the two scripts. In katakana, a long vowel sound is marked using the ー symbol after a syllable to indicate its vowel sound is twice as long as usual. However, not all vowel sounds that you would expect to be a long vowel are considered long vowels in Japanese. For instance, the Japanese word for Spain, スペイン, is not written as スペーン because Japanese hear a distinct エ followed by an イ in the word "Spain".

For hiragana, the convention is to write an extra vowel syllable to create a long vowel. However, due to the nature of the Japanese writing system, there are a few ways in which you can add an extra vowel:

- A long あ is always written as an あ-row syllable + あ.
- A long い is always written as an い-row syllable + い.
- A long う is always written as a う-row syllable + う.
- A long え can be written as either え-row syllable + え or え-row syllable + い, depending on the word it's in, and the kanji for this word.
- A long お can be written as either お-row syllable + お or お-row syllable + う, depending on the word it's in, and the kanji for this word.

To elaborate on the え/お issue, while generally the convention is to lengthen an お sound to おう, and え sound to えい, there are a great number of words that have native readings that are fixed as え-row syllable + え or お-row syllable + お. Also, when two kanji are combined where one ends on an え-row syllable and the next starts with an え, or one ends on an お-row syllable and the next starts with an お, then the combination isn't suddenly changed to えい or おう. This is because compound readings aren't technically long vowels, but simply combined pronunciations.

1.1.2.5. The "Double consonant"

This section is about the Japanese glottal stop. Typically called a "double consonant" in literature on Japanese, this name is a romanised invention, owing ot the fact that when writing out Japanese words that use this construction In romaji, we see a double consonant, such as in words like "kippu" meaning "ticket". Even in western languages, this is not technically a double consonant: we write it that way, but when we pronounce it we do not say one consonant two times, we do the same as the Japanese, namely use a glottal stop. Lacking actual consonants, Japanese has a simple way of denoting the glottal stop in speech, using a small つ or ツ. Thus, the word "kippu" is written as きっぷ, with the small っ before ぷ to "double its consonant".

However, な-column and ま-column syllables do not have a glottal stop preceding them. Instead, the ん / ン is used. So for instance "danna" meaning "master" is wrritten as だんな, not だっな.

1.1.2.6. Approximating non-Japanese sounds with katakana

To approximate sounds that aren't used in Japanese, a few additional rules allow the kana to be used to write out foreign words without having to use non-Japanese script. The following table shows how Japanese write out the English sounds for consonant/vowel combinations that have no (combination of) kana for it under the normal rules of using kana:

	a	i	u	e	o
f	ファ	フィ		フェ	フォ
v (1)	ヴァ	ヴィ	ヴ	ヴェ	ヴォ
v (2)	バ	ビ	ブ	ベ	ボ
w		ウィ	ウ	ウェ	
ts		ツィ		ツェ	ツォ
ch				チェ	
sh				シェ	
j				ジェ	
t		ティ	トゥ		
d		ディ	ドゥ		

As you can see, the approximation of the "v" sound has two possible transcriptions. The second is the officially preferred version, the first is the older way of approximating "v", which is still in use today, just less preferred.

1.1.3. Hiragana - 平仮名(ひらがな)

Hiragana is primarily used to write out things for which there are no kanji, such as verb inflections, or writing out things for which there are kanji but which do not warrant kanji to be used, such as some simple words, or writing out names without kanji.

1.1.4. Katakana - 片仮名(かたかな)

Katakana is used for two things. The main role of katakana is writing out foreign-derived words called gairaigo, 外来語(がいらいご), which have been integrated into the Japanese language (a common mistake is to think 外来語 are just words sounded out in Japanese. While this is true for some words because they are recently integrated words, it's not true for all. Consequentially, if a recent 外来語 doesn't sound like its equivalent in the language it came from, this is not a word that's been integrated "wrong", but a Japanese word).

Secondly, katakana is used to put emphasis on words, similar to the western use of italics, underlines or asterisks. While Japanese has separate emphasis marking for underlining (denoted by a line under text in horizontal writing, or on the right side of text in vertical writing) and syllable emphasis (denoted by dots over text in horizontal writing, or on the right side of text in vertical writing), using katakana places more emphasis than either of these, by virtue of being a different script altogether.

1.1.5. Kanji - 漢字(かんじ)

It should come as no surprise that the bulk of Japanese script is not actually Japanese, but Chinese in origin. Originally, Japanese was a spoken language without written form, and only after contact between the Japanese and Chinese were established, were the Japanese exposed to the concept of written record, leading to the borrowing of the Chinese writing system for recording spoken Japanese. The following section gives a brief explanation how this happened, and why the Chinese writing system is still being used.

1.1.5.1. The history of kanji

The Japanese kanji that are in use today are merely a subset of a vast number of kanji that were in use up to less than a century ago. The history of kanji use in Japan can be traced back to the 6th century A.D., with three ages significantly influencing which kanji and which of their readings were brought back home to Japan from China.

6th century A.D.

The first contact between Japan and China was during the late 6th century A.D., when China was moving from decentralised rulership back to a central rulership under Sui Wen-ti, who heralded in the Sui dynasty. This period did not last long, starting at the reunion of the independent states in China around 586 A.D., and ending in 618 A.D., after Sui's son had depleted the country of its resources through a series of poor political and military decisions. The power struggle that followed led to the T'ang dynasty being established by one of Sui's generals, Li Yuan. This dynasty would last until the 10th century A.D.

Confusingly, the Japanese refer to readings that come from this time as 呉音(ごおん) or Wu readings. However, the kingdom of Wu was in power from 29a.d. to 280 A.D., and ended well before the first real literary contact between Japan and China.

7-9th century A.D.

In the middle of the T'ang dynasty there was another exchange between Japan and China, this time with T'ang Chinese, which had been established as the main Chinese Dialect.

Confusingly again, the Japanese refer to readings that come from this period of exchange as 漢音(かんおん) meaning Han readings, which is even more confusing as the Han dynasties (there were three) predate the Wu kingdom.

14th century A.D.

The 14th century A.D. saw the most famous of eras for China, the Ming dynasty. Founded by Yu-chang, the Ming dynasty saw the Mongols being driven out of

China, and heavy trade with Europe. In this period, Japan and China had another linguistic exchange, from two fronts. Firstly, the merchants doing business with the Chinese brought back home readings that are referred to as 唐音(とうおん), and secondly from Zen monks who went to study Zen Buddhism in China and brought back readings that are referred to as 宋音(そうおん).

To complete the confusion, Japanese refer to 唐音 as T'ang readings, and to 宋音 as Sung readings. However, the T'ang dynasty ended in 906 A.D. being followed by the Sung dynasty, which ran from 960 A.D. to 1127 A.D., after which the north of China had to be abandoned to nomadic invaders, and continued from 1127 A.D. until 1279 A.D. in the south of China.

Because each of these three periods of exchange had a different Chinese dialect as dominant dialect, there may be many readings for the same kanji, as it would have still been in use (though possibly somewhat modified in form), with only the pronunciation having changed to suit the court that ruled at the time of the linguistic exchange.

1.1.5.2. Kanji readings

Because Japanese was originally a spoken language and very different from Chinese, modern Japanese is a hybrid of classical Japanese and classical Chinese pronunciations expressed in Japanese phonemes. This is reflected in the names of the "readings" for kanji: readings that come from classical spoken Japanese are called kunyomi, 訓(くん)読(よ)み, and readings that come from classical Chinese are called onyomi, 音(おん)読(よ)み.

A problem with these readins is that it is not always clear when to use which reading. There are no rules that state that a kanji is read in a particular way when used on its own, or when part of a word. The only real way to make sure you are using the right reading for a kanji when encountered in a context that you had not seen it in before, is to look it up - while sometimes one can guess whether a kunyomi or onyomi is used, it is typically impossible to be certain.

1.1.5.3. Why kanji are a blessing rather than a curse

Initially, they weren't. Chinese was to the Japanese what Latin was to the Scholars of old in the west - an elite language that only the rich and important people used. However, modern times have seen reforms restricting the kanji used in Japanese from the plethora of the Chinese lexicon (over 35 thousand characters if you really count them all) down to about 7000, of which you only need to know between three and three and a half thousand to be truly literate, rather than just able to read most normal texts thrown at you. This restriction means that Japanese now has a reasonably small (compare 3000 characters to over 50,000 words for English - many of which you will know - and it's suddenly not that much any more) set of kanji that are used in every day written Japanese,

and that the language has become more accessible to everyone, Japanese and non-Japanese alike.

There are two main reasons why kanji are a blessing, and they somewhat tie into each other. Because Japanese doesn't have any spacing, there are no clear word boundaries, and as a reader you have to find these boundaries yourself, using your best judgement. As verbal words in Japanese consist of a kanji plus some hiragana to indicate inflection (called okurigana, 送(おく)り仮名(がな)), and since nouns are typically in kanji and particles essentially always in hiragana, the presence of kanji in a sentence lets you find word boundaries a lot faster than if there were no kanji. The faster you can find word boundaries, the more time you can spend on translating the words, and the faster you can translate words, the faster you can understand what a sentence reads. This brings us to the second reasonon why kanji are a blessing: homophony.

When we call a language homophone, we mean that a substantial set of the words in the it sound the same, while being written differently and meaning different things. If we pair the fact that Japanese is a homophone language with the fact that it lacks spaces, the problem this creates seems almost insurmountable: sentences of which you don't know where one word ends and another begins, and which could mean any number of things depending on what you think a certain combination of syllables should be translated as. As an example, let's take the sentence "I am going to Tokyo", which in romanised japanese would be written as watashihatoukyouheikimasu (using hiragana mimicking romanisation). If you are just glancing this sentence, it would be incredibly hard to tell what it reads, because both "wata" and "watashi" are words in Japanese, as are "hatou" and "toukyou", and while "he" is used only as particle in Japanese, "ikimasu" could be from two different verbs (namely "iku", to come, or "ikiru", to live). This would be an incredibly inefficient way of organising written language, and kanji truly are the key to understanding Japanese on paper. Using kanji is a bit like adding notes directly in a text. In our example sentence, writing it in kanji we suddenly get something that looks a bit like the following: watashi (the one meaning "I") ha toukyou (the city) he i("going")kimasu.

So using kanji improves the readability of a text in two dramatic ways; finding word boundaries has suddenly become relatively easy, thanks to the interplay between kanji and kana, and the ambiguity of words that might mean five or more different things (and Japanese is full of those!) is solved at the same time.

A nice additioanl blessing of kanji is a less obvious one: furigana, 振(ふ)り仮名(がな). While in most western languages you can play with which word you use to express yourself as a writer or a poet, in Japanese, writers can choose to use kanji "improperly" to convey their intention better. Because of the existence of furigana, a system to write supposed pronunciation above kanji in printed text, it is possible to maintain the pronunciation of the word one means to use, but adapt the kanji so that it expresses a much finer nuance than just the kanji or

just the pronunciation for the intended word, or visa versa keep the kanji form of word but instead use a different pronunciation. Examples of these are for instance a phrase which uses the words "ano otoko", meaning "that man [over there]", but have it act as pronunciation for the kanji "yatsu", which is a derogatory term for someone. This way the writer can show that while the sentence "sounds" normal, there is a finer underlying motivation - a powerful tool for writers. Conversely, and this is a trick not infrequently used in manga for instance, is using the pronunciation "are" meaning "that thing [over there]" over very long words written in kanji only. The first time round the furigana will have the proper pronunciation, but a second time it simply reads "that", refering you back to the instance of the word that had the full, long, cumbersome furigana. This playing with words, inherent to the Japanese written form, is something that allows one to not just write what one is saying, or what one describes, but it allows writers to - when they want - write down the underlying thought at the same time, without footnotes or editorial; something that is impossible in almost every other language in the world.

1.1.5.4. Stroke orders, and why they matter

Kanji have very specific drawing orders for the strokes that make up the kanji. While this seems overly tedious, there is actually a logic behind this practice. Because of the existence of stroke order, kanji can actually be remembered in terms of compounds rather than individual strokes, because each compound corresponds to a single mental image. For instance, if one knows how to draw 糸, 又 and 土 (with only one way to draw each of these) then remembering how to draw 経 is a matter of remembering three components, rather than 11 individual strokes in an uncoordinated order. This pedagogical benefit is a direct consequence of the logical order that comes with drawing kanji. This order is actually "dictated" by a few general rules:

1. Kanji composed of multiple components are written in a top-down, left to right component order.
2. Strokes inside a component are typically written top-down, left to right. They may change direction, but only down or to the right.
3. When there are intersections that make determining which stroke comes first hard, the following rules apply:
    a. For a vertical/horizontal intersection that does not protrude at the bottom such as in 玉, draw the top horizontal first, then the vertical, then the rest.
    b. For a vertical/horizontal intersection that does protrude at the bottom, such as in 牛 or 年, draw all horizontals first, and finally the vertical.
    c. For X crossed strokes such as in 文 or 父, the stroke that runs upper-right/lower-left is drawn first, then the other.
    d. Complete shape intersecting lines such as the vertical in 中 or the horizontal in 母 are written last.

4. Box enclosures are written ｜ first, then followed up to 冂, then have their content drawn, and are then closed at the bottom.
5. Semi enclosures such as in 込 or 建 are written last, after the semi-enclosed component.

There are a few exceptions to these rules (of course), so when learning kanji one should always have a reference book that teaches you how to draw kanji. A common book for this is Hadamitsky and Spahn's "Kanji and Kana", but my personal preference goes out to a santaijiten, 三体辞典(さんたいじてん), a specialised dictionary that shows how to write kanji in three styles: regular handwritten style, flowing handwriting (semi-cursive) and full cursive style. These three styles together are referred to as kaigyousho, 楷行草(かいぎょうしょ), as an abbreviated word for the three separate styles: kaisho, 楷書(かいしょ), print writing, gyousho, 行書(ぎょうしょ), flowing writing (semi-cursive) and sousho, 草書(そうしょ), "grass" writing (cursive).

It should be noted that the rules given only apply to the print style, since semi-cursive and cursive connect up a lot of strokes so that the kanji can be drawn faster and in more of a flowing way than writing it stroke by stroke. As an indicator, most adult people's handwriting are somewhere between print style and flowing style.

1.1.5.5. Looking up kanji

"If you don't know how it's pronounced, why don't you look it up in the dictionary?" A much loved joke that in most western language will be funny because you obviously cannot look up a word if you don't know how it's pronounced, because you won't know how it's spelled. This is slightly different for kanji. Even if you don't know a kanji, there are still various ways to look it up and discover what its readings are.

Many kanji share common components. For instance, 坂, 軽 and 屋 all have 土 as part of them. There are 214 kanji like 土, that are both kanji by themselves, but can also be used to categorise other kanji that contain them in some form or other. These are called the 214 classical radicals or bushu, 部首(ぶしゅ), and have been used for ages in Chinese dictionaries for looking up kanji. However, because there can be minor (and sometimes major) drawing variations when a kanji is used as a radical, there are in fact about 400 graphemes that act as indexes for kanji.

Minor differences would for instance be 牛 (cow) turning into the left element in 物 (thing), with the only real difference being that the lower line is slanted instead of horizontal. More drastic changes are for instance 手 (hand) becoming the left element in 授 (instruct), where the top stroke is no longer used. The most drastic are the changes where a kanji is no longer readily recognisable from its radical counterpart. For instance, 犬 (dog) becomes the left component in 猫 (cat)

when used as a radical. 艸 (grass) becomes the top component in 草 (weeds), and probably the most confusing of all the pair 邑 (small village) and 阜 (big village) turn into the 阝 shape on respectively the right and the left side of kanji, such as in 部 (section) and 降 (descend).

Unlike for western dictionaries, you need to learn a few things before you can use a kanji dictionary. Firstly, you need to get used to learning to see kanji as sets of smaller kanji, rather than as random bags of lines and strokes. This typically takes a bit before you've seen at least enough kanji to start recognising shapes. Secondly, you need to learn which parts of a kanji are a radical, and which aren't. This also takes a bit of time, but practice makes perfect.

1.1.5.6. Compound pronunciations

There is one downside to the way in which the Japanese use kanji, and that's the spontaneous and unpredictable way in which kanji pronunciations may be voiced in Japanese. For instance, if we take the kanji 片(かた), pronounced 'kata', and 付(つ)ける, pronounced 'tsukeru', then combining them would yield katatsukeru. Except it doesn't; combining them voices the pronunciation of 付, to become 'dzu', and the whole word becomes katadzukeru.

This is strange. It's in fact so strange, that no one's been able to determine why this happens. There do not appear to be any rules for it, and when people do come up with rules, there tend to be as many exceptions as there are words that fall under them, so these 'rules' are relatively useless. It essentially means that you will have to remember which words are pronounced in which way, and always keep this in mind.

A second thing is that some pronunciations may contract. This is less problematic than the spontaneous voicing problem, as some rules can be given that are most of the time applicable, but again the best strategy is to just learn the word by pronunciation.

- If a kanji that ends on つ or ち is followed by a kanji beginning with a か-column, さ-column, た-column or ぱ-column syllable in the same word, typically the つ or ち is replaced with a っ to effect a double consonant.
- If a kanji that ends on く is followed by a kanji beginning with a か-column syllable in the same word, typically く is replaced with a っ to effect a double consonant.

1.1.6. How to write Japanese

Japanese can be written in two ways. The first is the more traditional way, writing vertically top to bottom, starting at the right of the page and working towards the left. This method is used when one writes anything by hand, and hasn't yet been completely killed off by the more western writing style of writing

left to right by hand. Most novels, as well as dialogue in manga, are written in this way.

The more western style is to write horizontally left to right, starting at the top of the page and working towards the bottom. Regardless of which way one writes, sentences end with a Japanese period called a kuten, 句点(くてん), or maru (まる), written as "。". Japanese also has a comma, 読点(とうてん), written "、". Quoting in Japanese is done differently depending on the writing style: in horizontal writing, regular quotes are enclosed by "「" and "」", but in vertical writing these quote marks are rotated clockwise 90 degrees, with a "┐" shape opening the quote and a "└" shape closing it. For names and booktitles and the likes, double quotes are used, "『" for opening and "』" for closing, and again rotated 90 degrees for vertical writing.

Finally, there are special symbols for repeated kanji and kana, of which in modern Japanese only the kanji repeater 々 (called a kurikaeshi, 繰り返し(くりかえし), meaning "repeat") is frequently used. The repeaters for hiragana are ゝ and ゞ, and the repeaters for katakana are ヽ and ヾ for unvoiced and voiced respectively, but due to the kana being relatively simple to write in contrast to many-stroke kanji, it is typically bad practice to use repeater symbols instead of repeating the kana.

1.2. The language

The Japanese language has a few interesting particularities: there are no articles (the, a, an), there is no explicit future tense for verbs (the predicative form is both present tense as well as future tense), there are no noun plurals, except for a handful of classes of nouns, personal pronouns are avoided whenever possible, and once a topic is known to all people, it's generally no longer mentioned even if the conversation concerns it, which means most of the time sentences will simply lack a subject. This makes the language both very simple, and very complex, because it means that there are very few rules to learn to form proper grammatical constructions, but that great understanding is required before you can figure out the precise meaning. For this reason, many example sentences in this reader will have words or subphrases enclosed in square brackets, to indicate that they are meant to be in the intended translation, but are not actually mentioned explicitly anywhere in the example sentence.

Before we look at how we're supposed to make sense of sentences and discourse, it makes sense to look at the principal word classes that can be identified in Japanese so that we at least have a slight idea of what we can expect.

1.2.1. Word classes

1.2.1.1. Verbals

Unlike most western languages, Japanese has two types of verbal words. That is, words that can be inflected and conjugated. While in most western languages, the only verbal word class is (not surprisingly) verbs, in Japanese this includes both verbs, and verbal adjectives. Verbs in Japanese are categorised in three main verb classes, "godan", "ichidan" and irregular verbs, based on the way they inflect. Verbal adjectives are also called i-adjectives because of the property that all verbal adjectives end on い in their predicative form, differentiating them from the noun adjective which will be explained later on.

Verbs in modern Japanese are inflected using five different inflection bases or "katsuyoukei", 活用形(かつようけい), depending on the role of the verb. I say modern, because classical Japanese uses six, also using the shuushikei:

mizenkei	未然形(みぜんけい)	The imperfect inflection base, used to indicate such things as negatives and potentials.
renyoukei	連用形(れんようけい)	The conjunctional inflection base, used for conjoining sentences and words.
(shuushikei	終止形(しゅうしけい)	The classical sentence ending inflection base. In modern Japanese, the 連体形 has replaced it.)
rentaikei	連体形(れんたいけい)	The predicative inflection base, used for ending predicates, sometimes called the dictionary form.
izenkei	已然形(いぜんけい)	The classical imperfect inflection base, used in modern Japanese for hypothetical
meireikei	命令形(めいれいけい)	The commanding inflection base, used for creating commands.

Verbal adjectives also use these bases, except that adjectives lack a 命令形, as one cannot issue an adjectival command. The only way to issue a command in relation to an adjective, both in western and Japanese, is to issue the command "be [adjective]", relying on the verb "being" to make it work.

What follows are the particulars of how verbs inflect, as well as a list of important verbs that deserve some special attention before continuing with the linguistic aspects of the Japanese language.

1.2.1.1.1. Godan conjugating verbs - 五段活用動詞(ごだんかつようどうし)

Named rather aptly, 五段(ごだん) literally means five-row. The name comes from the fact that in modern Japanese, the endings of the bases take on all five of the Japanese vowel sounds. Traditionally these verbs were called yodan, 四段(よだん) , meaning four-row, because the bases for these verbs end on the あ-, い-, う-, え-

and え- sounds respectively, which are four sounds. However, with there also being an お sound from the pseudo-futurum construction (created using the 未然形), these verbs have been renamed to 五段 verbs.

While explaining how to construct the bases for 五段 verbs is actually slightly easier to do when using rōmaji, this would be somewhat like cheating since it's not required, provided you remember your gojuuon , 五十音(ごじゅうおん) , or Japanese syllabaries.

In their predicative form (commonly called dictionary form because that's the form that you will find it listed under), 五段 verbs can end on any syllable that is on the same row as the う syllable in the syllabary table. The bases for 五段 are constructed by replacing the last syllable with one from a different row, with the row being dependent on the following table:

未然形	あ row syllable
連用形	い row syllable
連体形	う row syllable
已然形	え row syllable
命令形	え row syllable

To give a few examples:

"dictionary form"	分(わ)かる (understand)	引(ひ)く (draw)	読(よ)む (read)	会(あ)う (meet)
未然形	分から	引か	読ま	会わ
連用形	分かり	引き	読み	会い
連体形	分かる	引く	読む	会う
已然形	分かれ	引け	読め	会え
命令形	分かれ	引け	読め	会え

You may notice (at least I hope you did) that the 未然形 for あう, the last verb, is somewhat odd here. This isn't a typo, but a remnant of classical Japanese. Classically, verbs ending on う were actually ふ verbs, and they would be written -は, -ひ, -ふ, -へ and -へ, but pronounced -わ, -い, -う, -え and -え. With the linguistic reforms aimed at having words written more the way they were actually pronounced (such as 今日, which was written as けふ while being pronounced きょう), the way these bases were written was changed accordingly.

You may also have noticed that there are only four sounds, so where is the fifth? When placing a verb in the pseudo-futurum (a form used to express "let's...", "shall we..." and also "is...?") using the 未然形, the final あ sound is changed into おう:

連体形	分かる	引く	読む	会う
pseudo-futurum	分かろう	引こう	読もう	会おう

which completes the five vowel sounds.

These verbs are also referred to as "う-verbs", or "class I" verbs by many books and readers on Japanese. Since this reader tries to stick to Japanese as close as possible, we won't use those terms but will stick with the Japanese name instead.

1.2.1.1.2. Ichidan conjugating verbs - 一段活用動詞

While in modern Japanese there are only 一段 verbs, the name doesn't make a lot of sense unless I tell you a little about classical Japanese. In classical Japanese, there are actually four verb classes contrasting to 五段, namely the 上一段 verbs (upper single grade), the 下一段 verbs (lower single grade), the 上二段 verbs (upper two grades) and the 下二段 verbs (lower two grades). The reason they were called this is because of how their verb stem changed in the various bases. The 一段 category had a stem that throughout their bases had only one sound, and the 上 (upper) and 下 (lower) indicated whether this was in the upper grade (い) or in the lower grade (え) of the 五十音. The 二段 category on the other hand had a stem that throughout their bases had two possible readings, gaining an う reading, and the 上 and 下 indicated whether this was in the upper grades (い or う) or the lower grades (う or え).

However, as time went on, and as there were a really small number of verbs in the 下一段, 上二段 and 下二段 categories the conjugation system got simplified by the people and the classical verb forms have all been turned into either 五段 or (gradeless) 一段.

The bases for all four are the same in modern Japanese:

未然形	remove る
連用形	remove る
連体形	keep る
已然形	replace る with れ
命令形	remove る

There is sometimes some confusion about whether the 命令形 for 一段 verbs should be to remove る, or whether it should be replaced with ろ. This is usually a phrasing problem: 命令形 means two things in Japanese. On the one hand, it means the commanding inflectional base. This is a grammar term. On the other, in normal language the noun 命令形 refers to something "spoken in a commanding form". For the grammatical inflection basis, the form is the same as

the 未然形 or 連用形. That is, drop the る. When an actual command is issued, the 命令形 inflectional basis can get either よ or ろ to form a real command. However, since ろ is used far more than よ, people sometimes mistakenly believe this is also the grammatical basis.

These verbs are also referred to as る-verbs, or class II verbs by many books and readers on Japanese. Some books also distinguish between class IIa and class IIb verbs, to reflect the difference between 上一段 and 下一段 (though, why they do this is a bit of a mystery).

1.2.1.1.3. Irregular conjugating verbs - 変格活用動詞 (へんかくかつようどうし)

Japanese has a well-counted two irregular verbs, and of the two, one is actually irregular in a rather unexpected way. So let's do that one first.

kuru, 来(く)る, is the verb used in Japanese to mean "to come", and if viewed in its kanji form seems to be a regular 一段 verb except for the 命令形. However, if we look at how the kanji is pronounced through its bases, we suddenly see it's doing wildly strange things, actually changing reading for the kanji, rather than for inflection kana:

	kanji form	pronunciation
未然形	来	こ
連用形	来	き
連体形	来る	くる
已然形	来れ	くれ
命令形	来い	こい

As an added irregularity, unlike 一段 verbs the grammatical and everyday 命令形 are the same for this verb.

The second irregular verb is suru (する), "to do". This verb has no kanji form in modern Japanese, but it does have a few derivatives: zuru (ずる) and jiru (じる). ずる is just a voiced version of する, and じる is a more modern version of ずる (classical verbs ending in [う syllable] + る have mostly become modern verbs ending in [い syllable] + る instead). The bases for する, ずる and じる are:

	する	ずる	じる
未然形	し, せ (さ)	じ, ぜ	じ
連用形	し	じ	じ
連体形	する	ずる	じる
已然形	すれ	ずれ	じれ
命令形	せ, し, せい	ぜ, ぜい	じ

As a note, the 未然形 "さ" for する is only used for constructing the passive (される) and causative (させる) verb forms.

1.2.1.1.4. Verbal adjectives - 形容詞(けいようし)

The verbal adjective uses bases for inflections just like verbs, but the way they're constructed is a bit different from verbs. As mentioned, Japanese verbal adjectives end on an い, but it should be noted that this doesn't mean that adjectives that sound like they end on い are verbal adjectives. For instance, the noun adjective 綺麗(きれい) ends on an い, but is most definitely not a verbal adjective. A good indication is whether the adjective ends with something ending on い after its kanji form. Clearly, 綺麗 doesn't end on an い, but a real verbal adjective such as 楽(たの)しい ("enjoyable") does.

The bases for verbal adjectives are based on the concept of the adjectival stem, the gokan, 語幹(ごかん). This is the part of the verbal adjective if you remove the final い.

語幹	remove the last い
未然形	stem + く
連用形	stem + く
連体形	stem + い
已然形	stem + けれ

As mentioned, an adjective has no 命令形 of its own. To create a commanding form for an adjective, the 連用形 is combined with the commanding form of aru (ある), meaning "to exist" for inanimate things. This would be stem + く + あれ, but the く+あ sound contracts to form か instead, so the "commanding form" for a verbal adjective is stem + かれ. A more common way to issue a command involving an adjective is to not so much say "be [adjective]", but "become [adjective]". This can be done using the adverbial form of adjectives (the 連用形) paired with the verb なる, to become, in commanding form なれ.

1.2.1.1.5. Some important verbs

Before we continue with the nominal word class, we should take some time to look at a couple of important verbs used in Japanese because they are both common and special.

1.2.1.1.5.1. desu (da) / aru / iru - です (だ) / ある / いる

Where in English the verb "to be" is used for both the copula (the verb that sets up definitions such as "A is B") and existential verb (the verb that indicates existence somewhere such as "A is [here]"), in Japanese these are two (or more accurately three), distinct things. To indicate that A is B, the polite copula verb

です or plain copula だ are used. These verbs can only be used to couple attributes to something, such as for instance "the chair is wooden" or "Kimiko is Japanese".

The existential verb on the other hand is actually two verbs in Japanese, one describing existence for animate objects and the other describing existence for inanimate objects, being iru, いる (居る), and aru, ある (有る), respectively. To illustrate the difference between animate and inanimate, let's look at two sentences:

犬(いぬ)がいる。
[There] is a dog.

本(ほん)がある。
[There] is a book.

In both sentences が marks the preceding part as subject of the sentence. Both sentences translate to "there is X", but in the first sentence X is a dog, which is an animate object, and thus いる is used. In the second sentence X is a book, which is rather inanimate, and thus ある is used. Also, in both sentences "there" is an implied concept. Because we are using verbs to mark existence and we are talking about actual instances of dogs and books, saying they exist means we also say they exist at some location, even if this location isn't explicitly given.

If instead we only want to define something, i.e. say something "is" a thing, such as "it is a dog" or "it is a book", we use です or its informal version だ. For most people used to western language, these verbs may at first glance seem to do the same as what ある / いる do. After all, the sentence "it is a dog" is essentially the same as the sentence "there is a dog" with the word "there" replaced with "it". However, there is a very important difference: in "there is a dog", we are saying that a dog exists somewhere, whereas in "it is a dog", we are defining some "it" to be of the category "dog". In terms of what this means these are two wildly different concepts - if we were to replace "there" with "it" while keeping these roles in mind, we could suddenly define something called "there" as being of the category "dog"...

To put it concisely, definitions in Japanese can only be done with です/だ, and existence can only be done with いる/ある.

犬です。
It is a dog.

本だ。
It is a book.

本は四角(しかく)いです。
Books are rectangular.

犬は動物(どうぶつ)だ。
Dogs are animals.

1.2.1.1.5.2. aru (again)

We're not quite done with ある yet, because ある is also used in the role that in English is taken by "to have" in sentences like "I have a radio". In Japanese, you don't say you "have" something, but that "something is with you". For instance, if I want to say that aside from my portable radio I also have a radio at home instead of saying "I have a radio at home too" I would say "there is a radio at my house too":

うちもラジオがある。
I have a radio at home too.

Because of this double role, it's quite an important verb.

1.2.1.1.5.3. aru (one last time)

There is one final thing to know about ある. While not a true irregular verb, ある has an irregularity for its plain negation. Since ある means "to be" for animate verbs, and since the adjective ない means "is not". The informal negation for ある is actually this adjective, rather than あらん or あらない (this is not the case in several dialects, but for standard Japanese, it is).

ラジオがない。
1) There is no radio.
2) I do not have a radio.

The Japanese sentence can mean both things due to the fact that ある can mean two things.

1.2.1.1.5.4. suru - する

We've already seen する as irregular verb, where I told you it meant "to do". This is true in general, but it's not the only meaning for する. When used as a direct transitive verb, する means to do. However, when used as indirect transitive verb, it means "to decide on"/"to choose". Since you may not be familiar with these concepts, a brief explanation: direct transitive verbs describe an action being performed on something. For instance in "I eat an apple", the act of eating is applied to an apple. Similarly, In "the kids make music", the act of making is applied to music. In contrast to direct transitivity, there are also indirect transitive verbs. For instance in "I decide on having cake" I don't decide "having

cake", but I decide "to have cake". In the sentence itself, the verb "decide" indirectly applies to "having cake". Many verbs will be both direct and indirectly transitive: "I give flowers to my girlfriend" has a direct component, "give flowers" and an indirect component, "give to [someone]".

To show the difference in meaning between the direct and indirect version of する, two short sentences:

何(なに)をするか - What are [you] doing?

何にするか - What will [you] decide on?

In the first sentence, を marks the preceding as direct object to the verb, while in the second sentence, に marks the preceding part as indirect object to the verb. The difference in meaning is striking.

There is a third meaning to する, when paired with と, which is "to consider something ...":

これが私(わたし)が必要(ひつよう)とするものです。
These are the things I consider important.

1.2.1.1.5.5. naru - なる

Before you can say something "is" something else, it first has to "become" this something else. In Japanese, "to become" is expressed with the verb なる, which can be used to describe the "becoming" of states ("to become cold") using adjectives (which need to be modified to adverbs for this), the "becoming" of things ("to become an adult") using nouns, or to just describe the process of "becoming" in some way using adverbs ("to quickly become [...]").

1.2.1.1.5.6. kakeru (tr) / kakaru (intr) - 掛(か)ける / 掛(か)かる

These two verbs are part of the Japanese "Swiss army knife verbs" group. A select group of verbs that are paired with a thousand and one things to mean as many things. The principle meaning for the transitive 掛(か)ける is typically some form of "to begin to", and for the intransitive 掛(か)かる "to take/to require", but it's not always obvious.

Examples of かける being used are things such as:

火(ひ)をかける　- to start a fire.
声(こえ)をかける　- "to start a voice" → to call/greet someone.
問(と)いをかける　- "to start a questioning" → to ask [someone] a question.
電話(でんわ)をかける　- "to start a phone" → to call someone.

Examples of かかる being used are things such as:

時間(じかん)がかかる　- to take time.
気(き)にかかる　- "to require ki" → to weigh on one's mind.

1.2.1.1.5.7. tsukeru (tr) / tsuku (intr) - 付(つ)ける / 付(つ)く

Another part of the "Swiss army knife" group, 付(つ)ける and its intransitive counterpart 付(つ)く are also very important verbs. Possibly more elusive than かける / かかる, both typically mean something like "adjoin"/"be adjoined to", "attach"/"be attached", "become part of/one with"/"be part of/one with".

Examples of 付ける being used are things such as:

話(はなし)を付ける　- to settle an argument.
気(き)を付ける　- to be careful.
身(み)に付ける　- to make [some knowledge or behaviour] one's own.

Examples of 付く being used are things such as:

目(め)に付く　- to be noticeable.
気が付く　- to notice.
話が付く　- to come to an agreement.

1.2.1.2. Nominals

Nominals are words that act as nouns. In Japanese, there are three word classes that count as nominals. Firstly, of course, there's the nouns. Secondly, there's the noun adjectives, and finally, there are the kosoado, sometimes called Japanese pronouns.

1.2.1.2.1. Nouns - 名詞(めいし)

There's not much to say about nouns. They're nouns, they do what nouns do (namely, nothing at all). Nouns can be genitively related to one another by using the particle の, in the pattern A の B, used to mean "A's B". This kind of genitive listing can be done for as many words as you like, just like you can in English: The housekeeper's sister's favourite radio programme's DJ's dog's collar.

1.2.1.2.2. Noun adjectives - 形容動詞(けいようどうし)

The noun adjective is different from the verbal adjective in that tenses for noun adjective are, like in English, formed using the copula verb. Noun adjectives are principally nouns, but instead of ending on an い, like verbal adjectives, they end on な when used as adjective. For example:

きれい (綺麗) - pretty
きれいな人(ひと) - pretty person

四角(しかく) - square
四角な形(かたち) - square shape

1.2.1.2.3. Pronouns, part 1: the "kosoado" (こそあど) - 代名詞(だいめいし)

In Japanese rather than pronouns, kosoado (こそあど) words are used, named after the four prefixes that are used consistently to indicate the closeness of the "pronoun" to the speaker. To understand this, the concept of a personal zone is important: the Japanese do not separate locations in just "here" and "there", but actually use three levels of "somewhereness". Words starting with "ko" (こ) refer to things in the speaker's personal zone, words starting with "so" (そ) refer to things in the listener's personal zone, and words starting with "a" (あ) refer to things that are neither in the speaker's nor the listener's personal zone. Finally, words starting with "do" (ど) are the question word for the series.

There can be some confusion when こそあど words are called "pronouns", as several series are actually not pronouns, but require nouns to work. The most important of these is the following series:

この[noun] - this [noun]
その[noun] - that [noun]
あの[noun] - that [noun] over there
どの[noun] - which [noun]

As is obvious, this series is not actually a pronoun series since it doesn't replace the noun in question. Instead, it is an indicative set that is used in conjunction with a noun - something that a word called a "pronoun" cannot do. There are こそあど series that are real pronoun serious though, such as:

これ - this.
それ - that.
あれ - that over there.
どれ - which.

Notice the periods after the English translations; these have been added to make sure you understand that these words are "done." They are replacement nouns, and cannot be used in conjunction with a noun.

The rest of the common こそあど series are:

こんな[noun] - this kind of [noun]
そんな[noun] - that kind of [noun]
あんな[noun] - that kind of [noun] over there
どんな[noun] - what kind of [noun]

Beginning students may confuse どんな with the word 何(なに) which means "what", when thinking of dialogues such as: "I bought a velour pillow" - "wow, what does that feel like?" While the dialogue uses the word "what", the Japanese question would actually be "what kind of feeling does that have?"

こちら - this direction/honourable person.
そちら - that direction/honourable person.
あちら - that direction/honourable person over there.
どちら - which direction/honourable person.

This series can mean two things, depending on context. Since Japanese tries to avoid using personal pronouns, it is considered polite to refer to someone by referring to the direction in which they are located, relative to the speaker, similar to using the English indirect way of referring to someone: "Over here we have Mr. Carver", rather than just saying "This here is Mr. Carver".

こっち - this direction/this person.
そっち - that direction/that person.
あっち - that direction over there/that person over there.
どっち - which direction/which person.

Since this is a contracted version of the previous set, it cannot be used to refer to people respectfully - you don't use colloquially contracted words when you're

being respectful. You can use this word to refer to people, but then only in a familiar conversation.

こう - this way/manner.
そう - that way/manner.
ああ - that way/manner (referring to something distal).
どう - how/in which way/manner.

Notice the seeming itregularity for ああ here. I say seeming, because this kosoado series is actually each of the four "prefixes" with a long vowel sound. While for こ, そ and ど this is a う, for あ this is of course not a う at all but another あ.

Finally, there is also a somewhat more classical series of which the こ- and そ- are not used all that frequently anymore:

こなた - this person (I/me/you/him/he/her/she).
そなた - that person (him/he, her/she).
あなた - that person over there (you).
どなた - which person (who).

Since this set is a tad classical, there are few things to notice. First of all, unlike expected, そなた refers to a third person (he/she), while あなた refers to second person (you). Also, while somewhat classical, this set is still used in formal setting. However, because it is used exclusively in formal settings it is considered distal and very impersonal, and should thus only be used in formal settings where it would be improper to address someone the normal way. As an added bonus, あなた is commonly understood to be two seemingly completely opposite things. On the one hand there is the deferred, distal, formal word for "you", and on the other hand it also means "you" in a highly intimate relationship, akin to the English term "darling" being used by couples to call each other's attention.

1.2.1.2.4. Pronouns, part 2: personal pronouns - 人代名詞(じんだいめいし)

Some people may tell you that Japanese has no word for "you". These people are simply wrong - you avoid using "you" as much as possible in Japanese, referring to people by their family name suffixed typically with さん, or when appropriate, their title. This doesn't mean you never use "you" - there are in fact a great number of words meaning "you" that can be used when the need arises. However, all of them mean more than just that "you" and connote differences in social levels, as well as having different rudeness/politeness levels. Personal pronouns are quite often left out of a conversation unless strictly needed. This goes for all personal pronouns; Not just "you", but "I'/"me" is typically left alone after it's clear you're talking about yourself, as are "he"/"she", "they" and "we", most of the

time. Japanese is a very context sensitive language, but that also means that everyone that's fluent in it knows when a context has been established. Since pronouns typically refer back to an already known party, in Japanese it doesn't make sense to continuously remind your conversational partner(s) who you're talking about - in fact it's considered bad Japanese.

That said, there are times when you need to use personal pronouns, mostly at the start of a conversation or when you really want to make a reference to someone so that there can be no misunderstandings about who you're talking to/about. When you do, it helps to know which personal pronoun is best suited for which situation.

First person pronoun - "I"

- 私(わたくし), an overly formal version of "I". This personal pronoun is typically too formal for any situation you will be in.
- 私(わたし), the gender-neutral, formality-neutral personal pronoun for "I' or "me".
- 私(あたし), a female-only version of the formality-neutral person pronoun
- 僕(ぼく), literally meaning servant. Used predominantly by men, this personal pronouns means you humble yourself in respect to the listener. While predominantly used by men, it can be used by women too.
- 俺(おれ), a boastful first person personal pronoun, which is used when you are confident that sounding boastful is accepted. Predominantly used by men, this can also be used by go-getting women.

Second person pronoun - "you"

- 君(きみ), a version of "you" that contains a slight element of looking down on someone. You are technically placing yourself socially higher when you use it.
- お前(まえ), a rough and almost rude way to say "you"
- 貴方(あなた), the distal, deferred way to say "you". Because it is very formal, it can also be considered impolite outside of very formal settings.
- あんた, the shortened version of あなた, this is roughly the same as using お前.
- 貴様(きさま), something to avoid. While 貴 means "pecious" or "honor", and 様 is an honourable suffix, this word has made a half turn from being used as a classicaly honorific pronoun to a modern day accusative pronoun, and is as close to a curse word without being one, as one could possibly get.

Third person pronoun - "he/her"

- 彼(かれ), while a neutral "he", is a word that should be avoided simply because it is considered bad practice to use personal pronouns. Because of this, using it at

all is already slightly derogative to the person you're referring to if you know them by name.

- 彼女(かのじょ) , when used as personal pronoun, has the same connotation as 彼, except for girls. However, in addition to being a personal pronoun it can also mean "girlfriend" as a regular noun (with the noun version of 'boyfriend' being 彼氏(かれし)).

Japanese has no explicit plurals, so you might think that expressing "we" or "them" might require separate words too, but this is not the case. There exist "group" suffixes in Japanese that can be used with person pronouns to turn the single person "me" into the group "we", the single person "you" into the group "you [people]" and the single persons "he"/"she" into the group "them":

> ～達(たち) - This is the common group-suffix for turning personal pronouns into personal group pronouns. However note the following suffix:
>
> ～等(ら) - This suffix is an older group suffix and can be used to turn お前 (you) into お前等 (plural you), 彼 (he) into 彼等 (them) and 貴様 (accusative you) into 貴様等 (plural accusative you)

When using group suffixes for 彼 or 彼女, it depends entirely on the gender of the first person in the group that you refer to. If there's a group of mixed gender but you were just talking about a female member of the group, then the entire group can be referred to using 彼女達. Similarly, if a male member of the group was talked about, 彼等 will refer to the exact same group.

It should be noted that these markers are not true plural markers. 私達 literally means "the group I am part of", and can refer to either a physical group gathered at some point in time at a specific location, or can refer to someone's in group. Similarly, 等 is also a group marker, where for instance お前等 means "the group you are part of". It is important to remember this, as some translations for sentences that have plural personal pronouns cannot use these 達/等 markers:

> "As the committee on social affairs we have decided to ...."

This kind of sentence, in which someone speaks for an entire group, requires the "group representative" personal pronoun "wa" or "ware", 我(わ・われ) , typically used in the pattern "我が/は [...]". If one does not just speak as a representative of a group, but speaks in name of the entire group, rather than using the group suffixes 達 or 等, the special word "wareware", 我々(われわれ), is used.

The most important thing to remember is to try to use personal pronouns as little as possible. Instead, if you're referring to someone of whom you know the name, use their name suffixed with さん instead. If you do not know their name,

find out what it is. The only polite way to refer to people is as people - don't refer to them as mere objects by using pronouns.

1.2.1.2.5. Important nouns

Japanese has two nouns which are of such importance that they deserve to be looked at on their own. these two words are koto, 事(こと), and mono, 物(もの). Together they cover the way in which the Japanese tend to use language, not to mention essentially the entire universe.

1.2.1.2.5.1. koto - 事(こと)

You could probably write a nice paper on why こと sums up the Japanese mind set. I will not use quite that much text for it, but it is hard to overestimate the pivotal role this word has when illustrating the difference between Western languages and Japanese.

こと means "concept", or "notion", and is used to not so much talk about an actual thing, but only the mental concept that exists for it. For instance, 歩く is a verb meaning "to walk", but 歩くこと means "the concept of walking". It raises the idea of walking from something concrete - namely, the act of walking - to something abstract - the mental notion of walking, and whatever this commonly entails.

This "talking about something on a level higher" is one of the reasons that Asia in general is considered more spiritual, since a lot of the time rather than talking about the actual things, they seem to be talking about the philosophical or spiritual abstractions. In the Japanese language this allows you to express things in relation to your thoughts, or your concepts, rather than the real thing. For instance, if one doesn't like a particular person, it might just as well be that the person themselves is a normal person, but the mental image you have of them is something you do not like. You could say "I do not like you", but that's direct (something that you try not to be in Japanese, unless it's a familiar setting), or you can say "I do not like your こと". This way, you shift the disliking from the actual person to what your concept is of them - in essence, you've shifted the fault away from them, to potentially lying with yourself.

Of course, in real life nearly no one's going to realise that's what they're doing on a day to day basis as they're too busy just living and doing what it is they do every day, but it does pose a foothold into understanding why the Japanese language works the way it does (I wonder what Immanuel Kant would have thought of this...)

1.2.1.2.5.2. mono - 物(もの)

In contrast to the abstract "thing" that こと describes, もの expresses a more real "thing". Real should not be confused with tangible here though. For instance, one's childhood is real, but intangible, much like the feeling you get while being in the presence of someone you don't like is real, but intangible. In contrast, the concept of having a childhood is not real, but purely a mental concept, much like your beliefs on why someone would be disliked aren't necessarily real, but merely your own interpretation of the universe.

もの thus refers to real things, both tangible and intangible - it can refer to things like an old couch or a building or something you can eat, but it can also be used to described things such as 'having been raised properly'. This "thing", while intangible, is not something that merely exists as concept, it's something you underwent as a child, and as such is very real. Because of this, もの can be used to mean a lot of things. It can be used to talk about past experiences, it can be used to illustrate established social customs, and can be used to emphasise a speaker believes something is real enough to act as a reason for something.

This difference between these two nouns then is a complex one, and just reading about them isn't enough to drive the point home; one typically needs to hear こと and もの used time and again until one can intuit the use of both. The description just given should really only be considered a (small) foothold for when one starts to study Japanese in earnest - these two words together are powerful enough to describe the entire physical as well as mental universe.

1.2.1.3. Compound words

Not unlike many other languages, both Asian and western, Japanese is a language that allows the creation of new words by simply affixing one word to another. These types of words are called compound words. English isn't that rich in compound nouns, but there are enough examples to choose from: for instance, the word "teapot" is a compound noun consisting of the noun "tea" and the noun "pot". In Japanese, compound verbs, compound adjectives and compound nouns are all possible, as well as noun-verb/verb-noun compounds and noun-adjective/adjective-noun compounds.

Some say that this means that the Japanese vocabulary can be reduced to a "real" subset of only the individual words, because compound words are just the sum of their parts, but as is the case in many languages where compound words are common rather than rare, in Japanese this is simply not the case. While for adjective and noun compounds it is quite often the case that the compound is merely the sum of the individual words, for many verb compounds the compound meaning isn't just both meanings of the verbs used to make it. Typically, these type of compounds have a meaning that carries extra nuance, or sometimes even a seemingly different meaning from what one would expect based on the individual verbs.

1.2.1.4. Adverbials

Japanese also has adverbs, words that modify not nouns but verbs. In English, adverbs are words like "quickly" in "Simone quickly ran for the door." or "majestically" in "The butterfly flew majestically." In Japanese there are two kinds of adverbs. The first are words that have always been adverbs, and the second are adjectives that are placed in a particular inflection so as to act adverbially.

The first type of adverbials are mostly quantifiers. Words such as sukoshi, 少(すこ)し, meaning "a little bit", zutto, ずっと, meaning "very much"/"throughout" or tokidoki, 時々(ときどき), meaning "sometimes".

The second type can be constructed out of either verbal adjectives, or noun adjectives. However, the way they are inflected to become adverbs is different for the two. Verbal adjectives are placed in their 連用形 form, and can then be used as an adverb. For instance, the verbal adjective hayai, 早(はや)い meaning "early" can be made an adverb by placing it in its 連用形: 早く. This can then be used with for instance the verb for "waking up", okiru, 起(お)きる: 早く起きる - to wake up early.

Noun adjectives can be turned into adjectives by instead of adding な as suffix, adding に as suffix. For instance, きれい is a noun adjective meaning "pretty", きれいに is an adverb meaning pretty. If we pair this with the verb for "to split", 分(わ)ける we get きれいに分ける meaning "to cleanly split" (such as a watermelon on a hot day)

1.2.1.5. Sound words

Some linguists claim that the more evolved a language is, the less onomatopoeia (sound words) a language has. While this might be true for western languages, for Japanese this claim is about as unfounded as possible. Japanese has a rich onomatopoeic vocabulary, with several thousand words to describe the various sounds things make ("the cow goes moo"), as well as words to describe the state of things ("the tree stood looming" - these are called mimesis). Unlike western language, Japanese doesn't use these just for children's books and comics, but they're an integral part of the natural every day language. If you would hear someone say "I fell asleep on the bus and went zzz all the way to work. I almost missed my stop" in English you'd wonder about their conversational skill, but in Japanese that sentence would be both a grammatical as well as natural sounding sentence.

1.2.1.5.1. Onomatopoeia - 擬音語 (ぎおんご)

Onomatopoeia are words that reflect the sound things make. In Japanese, a statement such as "the water went drip drip down the sink" can mean various different things depending on the exact choice of onomatopoeia for "drip drip". One could for instance use "taratara", たらたら, which is the sound of a steady regular dripping, or "daradara", だらだら which is a heavier sound. One could also use "botabota", ぼたぼた, which is a fuller sound and implies big drops, or "tarari tarati", たらりたらり, which would imply it's only dripping intermittently. One could even use "pisha", ぴしゃ, so that it's the sound of only a single drop hitting something.

This is a very complex use of sound words, something which in English is simply impossible because it lacks both the vocabulary for it, as well as the acceptance of using onomatopoeia in regular speech.

1.2.1.5.2. Mimesis - 擬態語 (ぎたいご)

Like sounds, object properties can have words associated to them too. For instance, a gem can go "sparkle sparkle" and someone can look like they want to say "bleh". In Japanese, again, there is a great number of state describing words that can be used, with again typically multiple words being usable for a situation with each word carrying their own added nuance. For instance, something that feels soft could be "fuwafuwa", ふわふわ, for fluffy soft, "kutakuta", くたくた, for being sort of squishy and soft, "funyafunya", ふにゃふにゃ, for sort of a flaccid softness, or it could be "kunyari", くにゃり, to indicate it's soft and lacks tension.

Quite often 擬音語 and 擬態語 can be paired with "to suru", とする, to turn the sound word into a verb. For instance, "kirakira", きらきら, means "sparkle sparkle", such as what gems or the surface of a lake when the light hits it do. If we add とする we get きらきらとする, which would literally mean "to do sparkle sparkle", and translates more naturally as just "to sparkle".

1.2.1.6. Particles and modifiers

Japanese, unlike western languages, doesn't tuck its grammar away in word interplay. Instead parts of speech are explicitly tagged using particles such as は (marking topic), が (marking verb subject), か (marking something as question), を (marking direct verb object) and a wide variety of other "particles". All these grammatical particles are suffixes, meaning that first the actual content is written, followed by a marker to specify what the preceding part should be interpreted as. There are many classes of particles, which we'll briefly go over here.

1.2.1.6.1. Denoting grammar explicitly

One of the most important sets of particles is the one that tells you which parts of a sentence should be considered which grammatical structure. The most important of these are probably the subject and verb object marker, but there are more:

- は marks a sentence topic. As a particle, this is always pronounced as わ
- が marks the verb subject (for passive verbs) or actor (for active verbs).
- を marks the verb direct object. As a particle, this is always pronounced as お.
- に marks the verb's indirect object, and marks the destination of a targeted verb action (there are actually more meanings for に, but these two are most essential).
- で marks the location at which a verb action is performed.
- も marks cross-sentence similarity marker.
- と marks closed noun listing particle.
- の denotes a genitive relation from the preceding part of the sentence to the following part (see nouns section).

Sentences can have wildly different meanings depending on which particles are used. For instance, let us look at the following sentence:

> 昨日(きのう)は犬(いぬ)が 私(わたし) の晩(ばん)ご飯(はん)を食(た)べました。
> Yesterday (topic marker) a dog (subject marker) I (genitive marker) dinner (direct object) ate.

This sentence reads "Yesterday, a dog ate my dinner" in normal English. Now, if we were to replace some particles in the sentence so that it instead reads the following:

> 昨日は犬を私が晩ご飯に食べました。
> Yesterday (topic marker) a dog (direct object) I (subject) dinner (indirect object) ate.

then this sentence now suddenly reads "Yesterday, it was I who ate the dog for dinner". A rather striking difference to say the least!

You may be wondering whether it is a problem that the sentence clauses now seem "unordered", but in Japanese this is actually not a problem. The best way to see this is to look at the Japanese sentences and ask yourself if you know what "proper order" is for Japanese at this point. While in English this would probably mess things up horribly, Japanese uses explicit grammar, so the order of all the little subcomponents doesn't actually matter that much; the clauses can be as unordered as possible, but as long as the right particles are used and the sentence ends with the operative verb, we are dealing with a perfectly grammatical sentence.

1.2.1.6.2. Postpositions instead of prepositions

Prepositions in English such as "in", "to", "for", "by", "over" and the like are in Japanese nearly all represented either by particles or by genitives paired with a directional or positional noun. The latter approach isn't very interesting because it's not hard to imagine that "above the closet" and "at the closet's above" are basically the same sentence, but the first approach is definitely interesting; there are several particles that act in a way that prepositions act in English, and a small list of these would include the following particles:

- に as (1) from above, it means "for" or "to", such as "I bought flowers for my host", or "I gave the book to the clerk."
- に as (2) from above, it means "to" similar to "We're going to Tokyo."
- へ also translates to "to" in terms of "We're going to Tokyo", but is more subtle. Instead of standing for the destination of a targeted verb, へ stands for the general direction in which the action takes place. Thus, a more accurate translation would be "We're going in the direction of Tokyo." Also, as a particle this is always pronounced as え.
- から means "from" such as in "We came from New York", or "I will be available from 10 p.m."
- まで means "up to"/"until" such as in "We're going up to Tokyo" or "We'll be busy until 3 o' clock."
- より is used to indicate a comparison where the clause preceding より is less [something] than the clause following it.
- しか expresses "save", such as "save for church, I didn't go anywhere today."
- だけ expresses "only", such as "I only went jogging today."

1.2.1.6.3. Modifiers and nominalisers

Some suffixes are also used to nominalise ("turn into a noun") sentences, so they can be used as sub-phrases in more complex sentences. We do this in English too, such as for instance "Every time I see a dog, I get nervous" where the sentences "I see a dog" and "I get nervous" are placed in the larger, more complex, sentence pattern "Every time A, B". In Japanese things like "Every time A, B" and other more complex sentence patterns can be created by using nominalisers such as the following:

- 場合(ばあい) turns a phrase into a component meaning "every time ..."
- 筈(はず) turns a phrase into an expectancy, such as "I expect the bus to arrive at 2".
- 度(たび) turns a phrase into a component meaning "when ..."
- 時(とき) turns a phrase into a component meaning "at the time that/of ..."
- 訳(わけ) turns a phrase into a component meaning "it is the situation that ..."

- 様(よう) turns a phrase into a component meaning "it would appear to be that ..."

We will look at these modifiers in more detail in the particles section.

1.2.1.6.4. Counters

Every student's public hell, counters make a seemingly trivial task actually very difficult. While you would expect to learn counting as one of the basic things, counting in Japanese is anything but basic. There's not just one but there are three different ways to count from one to ten, and which one you use is dependent on what you're counting. To make matters worse, unlike in most western languages, in Japanese you also have special counting words to indicate what kind of things you are counting. This wouldn't be too problematic if these words made sense, like counting books with the word "book" and counting shirts with the word "shirts", but as it turns out it isn't quite that simple.

Instead, counting words are categorial. For instance, a book is a bound volume, so it is counted with the counter for bound volumes. Shirts, when folded in a store, are sort of flat objects, so they get counted with the "flat object" counter.

Then there are two ways in which you can count items. While in English for instances, "I would like two cups of coffee" would be proper English and "I would like coffee, two cups" would be a bit odd, in Japanese both statements are considered proper ways of counting:

> 二杯(にはい)のコーヒーを下(くだ)さい。
> Two cups of coffee, please.
>
> コーヒーを二杯下さい。
> Coffee, 2 cups please.

Notice that due to the ordering of the count and the item, the first pattern requires the count and item to be genitively linked using の, while the second does not. We will look at counting and counters in more much detail in the particles section, when we examine a great number of counters and their specific function.

1.2.1.7. Prefixes

While particles are typically suffixes, not all of them are. There are a select few particles that are used as prefix, and while there are only a few, they are by no means unimportant. The most notable prefix particle, the honorific prefix, is one of these particles, as are those that express the same concepts as the English un-, non-, de- and similar negating word prefixes.

1.2.1.7.1. The honorific prefix

One of the most used prefixes is probably 御, pronounced either "o", "go", "mi", "on", or "gyo" (お, ご, み, おん, ぎょ), depending on what it's used for:

- The reading お is used to make words in Japanese reading honorific.
- The reading ご is used to make words in Chinese reading honorific.
- The reading み is used for imperial and Shinto terms, as well as to make words sound more poetic.
- The reading おん is rarely used and is mainly a classical prefix. It is a very formal way to say the same as お.
- The reading ぎょ is also rarely used, and indicates an imperial term.

This prefix is essential in various honorific and humble constructions, as we will see in the verb and construction sections on honorifics. It should be noted that some words, when used in daily speech, always get this prefix. A list of these words includes:

ocha, お茶(ちゃ) - green tea
okane, お金(かね) - money
oyu, お湯(ゆ) - warm/hot water (but not boiling)
ohiya, お冷(ひや) - cold water
onaka, お腹(なか) - belly, stomach
ohashi, お箸(はし) - chopsticks

gochisou, ご馳走(ちそう) - feast (used in ご馳走様(さま)でした, said when one is done eating)
gohan, ご飯(はん) - food, dinner

1.2.1.7.2. Negating prefixes

There are also various common prefixes that negate, void or otherwise create a counter-concept word when used.

When "mi", 未(み), is used, it expresses a "not yet"/"has yet to come" aspect, as can be seen from the following example words:

mirai, 未来(みらい) - future ("not yet arrived")
mikan, 未完(みかん) - incomplete ("not yet finished")
mikon, 未婚(みこん) - unmarried ("not yet married")
miseiri, 未整理(みせいり) - pending ("not yet arranged")

mihatsu, 未発(みはつ) - prior ("not yet taken off")

When "fu", 不(ふ), is used, it expresses a negative, similar to the English "un-", "im-", "a-" or "de-." Examples of this prefix are:

fukanou, 不可能(ふかのう) - impossible ("no possibility")
fukeiki, 不景気(ふけいき) - [economic] depression ("no business")
fujuujun, 不従順(ふじゅうじゅん) - disobedience ("no obedience")
fuchi, 不知(ふち) - ignorance (no knowledge)

When "mu", 無(む), is used, it expresses a non-existential, similar to "non-", "not ..." or "without" in English. Examples of this prefix are:

mukimei, 無記名(むきめい) - unsigned ("without signature")
mukou, 無効(むこう) - invalid ("without validity")
mushinron, 無神論(むしんろん) - atheism ("without deity")
mudan, 無断(むだん) - unauthorized ("without permission")

Finally, when "hi", 非(ひ), is used, it indicates "non-." Examples of this prefix are:

hieiriteki, 非営利的(ひえいりてき) - non-profit ("not commercial")
higenjitsuteki, 非現実的(ひげんじつてき) - unrealistic ("not realistic")
hijou, 非常(ひじょう) - emergency ("not usual")
hitaiou, 非対応(ひたいおう) - incompatible ("not compatible")

1.2.1.7.3. Assorted prefixes

Aside from these four negating prefixes, there are also a few other common prefixes that you will encounter frequently enough to deserve at least mention here. These are:

- 全(ぜん) - "all ..."
- 毎(まい) - "every ..."
- 新(しん) - "new ..."
- 大(だい) / 大(おお) - "big"
- 小(こ) / 小(しょう) - "small"
- 再(さい) - "re-"

- 最(さい) - "most ..."
- 反(たい) - "anti-", "counter-"
- 半(はん) - "semi-", "demi-", "incomplete"
- 以(い) - indicates a boundary or limit
- 真(まっ) - an intensifying prefix (remember that the っ becomes ん when it precedes な-column or ま-column syllables)

There are more, mainly due to the fact that nouns in Japanese can be compound nouns. Thus, a word that has a broadly applicable meaning can quite easily be considered a prefix if it's used with any frequency in compound words.

1.2.2. Accents and pitch

Linguistically speaking, Japanese - like various other Asian languages such as Thai or Chinese - uses syllable pitch to place accents in words. Quite often you will find this explained as Japanese being a language with two pitch levels, high and low, which makes it relatively easy to learn when compared to Chinese (four for Mandarin, at least eight for Cantonese) or Thai (in which not just pitch matters but it also matters if you audibly exhale on your consonants). However, this creates the false impression that there are only two tones at which you should pronounce Japanese, which is simply not true. Instead, accent through pitch in Japanese is best described in tonal progression and difference:

- If a word has its accent on the first syllable, then the pitch of the word starts high and drops suddenly at the second syllable. After this, it will go down slowly as the word is pronounced. Due to this relatively large difference between the first and second syllable, the first syllable is considered accented by the Japanese ear.
- If a word has its accent on a syllable other than the first or the last, the pitch rises gradually until the syllable after the accented syllable, where the pitch goes down suddenly to create the pitch difference considered an accent in Japanese.
- If a word is without accent, the pitch rises continuously from a low at the start of the word to a high at its end. This covers about 80% of all Japanese words and while the pitch does change, the lack of sudden changes makes this sound unaccented to the Japanese ear.

The presence and order of pitch changes can make the difference between for instance rain (雨) and candy (飴), both pronounced "ame" but with their accents on the first and second syllable respectively, or more drastically between an umbrella (傘) and syphilis (瘡), both pronounced "kasa" but again with their accents on the first and second syllable respectively.

While this pitch information is generally found in dictionaries, it should be remembered that the Japanese never learn this difference in pitch, but simply learn it by hearing words used and using them themselves. It is best to learn which words contain which pitch changes simply by listening to understandable Japanese (for your level of comprehension) and have how a word should be pronounced become somewhat of an intuitive task, rather than looking it up in a dictionary for every word.

1.2.3. Gender roles

Due to the different formality levels in Japanese, very often a particular style of speech is associated with a particular gender - the more polite and reserved speech being associated with female speech, and the more brash and forward plain speech being associated with male speech. While this is an understandable association, the problem with associating speech patterns with genders is that people often mistakenly apply backward logic: if the female speech pattern is reserved, then reserved speech is female speech.

This isn't how it works though: typically, speech patterns fall into categories like polite reserved speech, plain informal speech or for instance honorific speech, which are used by a particular gender more than the other, by virtue of statistics. However, this does not mean that what is considered "female speech" is never used by men, or what is considered "male speech" isn't used by women, as there is no such thing as exclusively male or female speech. A more accurate distinction is to consider speech patterns as direct versus indirect or assertive versus reserved. Women tend to be more reserved and use less direct speech, and men tend to be more assertive and use more direct speech. However, when the situation warrants it, there is nothing to prevent men from using reserved indirect speech, or women from using assertive direct speech. It's all about what the social setting warrants.

This said, there are a few words (not speech patterns) which are genuinely effeminate or masculine, such as the effeminate dubitative particle かしら, or the masculine personal pronoun 俺(おれ). It is important to notice that the labels used here are "effeminate" and "masculine", and not "female" and "male". Very effeminate men (such as transvestites or homosexuals) may very well use very effeminate words, and hardcore business ball-busting career women may very well use very masculine words to demonstrate their dominance. Again, it's all about the social setting.

1.2.4. Sentence structure

Because Japanese uses a different approach for constructing sentences from western languages, as mentioned in the particles section, the "sentence model" for Japanese is different from most western language. Some people like to make this easier for you by explaining that the English sentence model falls in the

subject-verb-object (SVO) category, and Japanese falls in the subject-object-verb (SOV) category, citing for instance the following example:

> In English, "I eat an apple" has "I" as subject, then "eat" as verb, and then "an apple" as object.
>
> In Japanese, 私(わたし)はリンゴを食(た)べます。 has "私" (I) as subject, リンゴ (apple) as object and then 食べます (eat) as verb.

These sentences are correct in that the analysis of the components used to make up the sentence is proper. However, it's also the least useful thing to know: since Japanese has explicit grammar, the only thing that you need to do for your sentence to be proper Japanese is to have the particles affixed to the right words and usually a verb at the end. Also, since Japanese is a very context sensitive language, everyone is accustomed to the context being omitted, so a subject will nearly never return in a conversation once it's been introduced. This means that the typical Japanese sentence doesn't follow the "subject-object-verb" rule, but the "use the right particles and maybe a verb at the end" rule.

Probably the only important thing to remember with Japanese sentences is that the most important bit of information is always presented last. This means that if you're going to, for instance, explain why you are late for work, the Japanese sentence structure wouldn't be "I am late for work because I overslept" but "because I overslept, I am late for work". This 'reverse order' in respects to most western languages can trip up students for a while, but it's something you simply have to grow accustomed to.

This gives us two rules we need to keep in mind when coming up with sentences:

1. Japanese sentences usually end on a verb
2. The more important something is, the later in the sentence you say it.

The second rule is of course only really important for sentences with multiple parts of varying importance, and becomes more important the longer you make your sentences. For instance, the English sentence "I tried to ask a passer-by to help me out, because trying to use the ticket machine I couldn't figure out how to use it, but even with their explanation I really didn't get how to use it at all" is quite long. There's a perfectly valid Japanese equivalent for it, but it does require rearranging the parts in order of importance.

1. I tried to ask a passer-by to help me out
2. I tried to use the ticket machine
3. I couldn’t figure it out how to use it
4. Even with their explanation I didn't get it

Of these, the last seems most important, because it's a conclusion. That leaves ordering the rest - parts 2 and 3 create one whole, and 3 is the most conclusive,

so we keep those two as a single entity. Now, does part 1 come before parts 2-3, or after? Since we're actually asking a passer by for help because we can't figure something out, it's more conclusive, and thus comes after 2-3. This means we end up with:

> "I tried to use the ticket machine" [but] "I couldn't figure it out how to use it " [so] "I tried to ask a passer-by to help me out" [but] "even with their explanation I didn't get it."

If we turn this into Japanese we get the perfectly valid sentence:

> 切符販売機(きっぷはんばいき)を使(つか)ってみたけど分(わ)からなくて通行人(つうこうにん)に手伝(てつだ)ってもらうようにしたが使い方(かた)の説明(せつめい)でも全然(ぜんぜん)分からなかった。

In this sentence we can identify:

1.	切符販売機を使ってみた	[I] tried to use [the] ticket machine
2.	分からなかった	[it] couldn't figure [it] out [how to use it]
3.	通行人に手伝ってもらうようにした	[I] tried to ask a passer-by to help [me] out
4.	使い方の説明でも全然分からなかった。	Even with [their] explanation [I] didn't get it

1.2.5. Discourse

We now know how we can construct single sentences, but Japanese is famous for being "context sensitive" in the extreme. This can only be demonstrated if we look at what happens when there are multiple lines of text acting as dialogue, and we actually have a context that can be established, omitted, and guessed at.

1.2.5.1. Context

A context, or topic, is different from a subject. A subject exists inside a single sentence, and is related to a single verb. A context, or topic, exists across a text or conversation, and instead of being related to anything, everything else is related to it. This is a pretty drastic difference. For instance, the topic of this section is "context", so if I write "it's an integral part of the Japanese language", you will know I'm talking about "context" and not about "using particles," This "knowing what is being talked about" is a lot more important in Japanese than it is in most western languages, as speaking Japanese implies you are able to follow conversations in which the moment something's become a context, it's no longer mentioned unless some problem may arise if it's not restated. A typical formal conversation could be for instance:

A: あたしのコップを見(み)かけませんでした？
B: いいえ、見てません。
A: おかしいわ。ついさっきまで持(も)ってたんだけど。
B: 居間(いま)のテーブルに置(お)いてきてしまったのではないでしょうか
A: あっ、そうかもしれませんね。

A: You haven't seen my cup, have you?
B: No, I haven't seen it.
A: That's odd. I just had it a moment ago.
B: Perhaps you left it on the table in the living room?
A: Ah! That might be.

Just as you'd expect from an English conversation, in the English translation the cup is referred to with "it" after it's been initially introduced. However, in the Japanese language there is no word for "it". Instead, the Japanese actually reads:

A: Haven't seen my cup?
B: No, haven't seen.
A: Odd... had just a moment ago.
B: Could be left on living room table?
A: Ah! Might be.

This is a very different story: not only are the "it"s gone, all the "I"s and "you"s are gone too. As already mentioned in the section on pronouns, Japanese simply doesn't use personal pronouns unless there is a real need to - you are expected to understand who said what, especially in simple conversations like these. Since it was A's cup, any actions like leaving the cup are necessarily performed by A, and since A asks B if he/she's seen the cup, "haven't seen" can only logically have been done by B.

1.2.5.2. Explicitly introducing context

In the previous example the concept of the cup was introduced through a question, but you can also start a conversation and introducing topics explicitly. For instance, if you've seen a good movie:

A: 昨日(きのう)友達(ともだち)のひそかと面白(おもしろ)い映画(えいが)を見(み)た。
B: どんな？
A: 「One flew over the cuckoo's nest」と言(い)う映画だった。
B: ああ、知(し)ってる。面白いよね。

A: I and my friend Hisoka watched a cool movie yesterday.
B: What kind of movie?
A: It was called "One flew over the cuckoo's nest".
B: Ah, I know that one. It's really cool isn't it?

Except this is of course not what the Japanese literally reads...

A: Yesterday I and friend Hisoka watched cool movie.
B: What kind?
A: Movie called "One flew over the cuckoo's nest".
B: Ah, know. Cool huh?

The literal translation for the last sentence is a good example of both a "very short grammatically correct Japanese sentence" (just one verb) and omissions all over the place because of context. While B only says "know" it is obvious through context that he's actually saying "I know that movie", because B is the speaker, and the topic of the conversation has become the movie "One flew over the cuckoo's nest" after line 3. In fact, the topic was already "a movie" after line 2, but line 3 further restricted it to a particular movie.

1.2.5.3. Asking questions and context

Before we start wrapping up this section to move on to verb conjugations in depth, a few words on questions. When you ask a question, you're asking about something that cannot possibly be a context, or you'd already know the answer. In Japanese, if a context is reiterated, it is marked with は to indicate it is a topic, rather than a sentence subject. However, when you ask for something new, you are asking about a particular subject, which exists only in your question.

For instance "Who is that person" may be in the context of whoever just came in, but your question's subject is the identity of whoever just came in, something that is not a topic yet. This means you're asking a sentence with as subject "who", 誰(だれ), and as verb "came in", 来(く)る: 誰が来(き)ましたか where we see the subject marked with が. While you may get confused at times, just remember that you cannot ask a question without a subject: 誰は来ましたか makes no sense - everything that's marked as は can technically be dropped and should still make sense as a sentence. If we do that here we'd get 来ましたか which typically means "Did [you] arrive?" this is very different from what we wanted to ask, so clearly は will be wrong.

Remember this. If you cannot omit it, then it's not a topic, and you must use が to mark it as a subject.

This may have seemed obvious to you, but it doesn't hurt to state it explicitly. What may not be obvious is that you will also have to remember that answers to questions posed with が also require が. Only until everyone knows the answer to

the question can the subject of the question be considered a topic. Thus, the following question/answer pair would be wrong:

A: 誰が来ましたか。
B: 木村(きむら)さんは来ました。

And this question/answer pair would be correct:

A: 誰が来ましたか。
B: 木村さんが来ました。

1.2.5.4. A last bit on subjects, objects and verbs in discourse

As a final note, I know I said that there are two rules you need to stick with, but even that's not entirely true. They are, however, more guidelines than rules, and you don't have to rigidly stick to them; for instance, the following bit of conversation would be just fine:

A; 新(あたら)しい車(くるま)を買(か)った。
B: へえ、どんな？
A: Nissan350知(し)ってるでしょう？
B: マジで！？
A: ああ、なかなかいい車だ。

A: I bought a new car.
B: Oh? What kind?
A: You know that Nissan 350 right?
B: Seriously!?
A: Yup, it's a pretty good car.

Notice how in the first sentence there already isn't an actual subject present, A doesn't mention himself at all, but B understands it's about A anyway, because otherwise A would have probably said who bought it as additional information. Then in the second line, B doesn't even use a verb, but only asks a question using a single pronoun. A then replies with an object + verb sentence, after which B again responds with a question that doesn't have a verb, but only a noun ("really") to which A replies with another object + verb sentence and we're done.

So perhaps we'd better rewrite rules 1 and 2 to read the following instead:

1. Japanese sentences with a verb, end on a verb.
2. If you have a best to save, save it for last.

That's basically all you're going to get. Forget the idea that every sentence is SOV. In fact, just forget there's a subject at all, most of the time there actually won't be and it'll be your job as a conversational partner, or as reader, to remember what the conversation or text was about.

2. Verb conjugation

This chapter will deal in more detail with the way verbs are conjugated in Japanese, reiterating the system of conjugational bases, and explaining which constructions are created using which base, and how.

2.1. Classes and bases

As mentioned in the outline on Japanese, Japanese verbs (in modern Japanese) have five bases of conjugation, which are used for all sorts of inflections and conjugations. While Japanese has no auxiliary verbs in the same way most western languages do, there are verbs that are used in a similar fashion to denote particular grammatical notions such as past tense, verbal list form, etc.

The way the bases are created differ depending on the verb class, but the way verbs are conjugated is the same for all verb classes. While the way to form the 連用形 requires different steps for different verbs, every verb can be made plain past tense using their 連用形 for instance.

Japanese has three verb classes, namely the 五段(ごだん) class, also referred to by literature as class I or う-verbs (because of the way the verb changes through its bases), the 一段(いちだん) class, also referred to by literature as class II or る-verbs, and the 変格(へんかく), or irregular, class of verbs.

Before we jump into the long list of how to create every conceivable verb conjugation with any Japanese verb we can find, it may be a good idea to review the way in which to create the verb bases again for the 五段 and 一段 verbs:

how to form the 五段 bases

未然形	あ row syllable
連用形	い row syllable
連体形	う row syllable
已然形	え row syllable
命令形	え row syllable

how to form the 一段 bases

未然形	remove る
連用形	remove る
連体形	keep る
已然形	replace る with れ
命令形	remove る

2.2. Verb constructions

2.2.1. Mizenkei - 未然形(みぜんけい)

The modern imperfective base, this base is used for four (though translated, 6) constructions: the negative, the passive, the potential, the honorific, the causative, and what is known as a pseudo-futurum (called pseudo, because Japanese has no real future tense). I say "translated, 6" because one construction, the (ら)れる conjugation, plays three roles in Japanese while being only one construction.

2.2.1.1. Negative

2.2.1.1.1. Direct negative 1 - ぬ

There are two ways to create a verb negative in Japanese. The first way involves using the classical helper verb of negation, ぬ. Since this is itself a verb, it also has a series of bases of its own, but because of its role it has no 未然形 or 命令形

連用形	ず
連体形	ぬ/ん
已然形	ね

When putting this helper verb behind verbs in 未然形, the verb in 未然形 has been turned into a negating construction. In modern Japanese, ん is used more than ぬ for verb negation.

However, this is a very 'crude' way to make a verb negative. There's an unwritten rule in Japanese that, if it were a written rule, would read something along the lines of "the longer your word, the more formal it is." Since this is the shortest way in which verbs can be made negative, it's also the most direct and informal way to construct a negation for a verb.

2.2.1.1.2. Direct negative 2 - ない

A less informal way to turn verbs into negative form is to, instead of using the classical helper verb ぬ, use the helper adjective of negation, ない (無い). This might seem like a strange idea, using an adjective to turn a verb into a negative, but one has to remember that Japanese doesn't follow the rules of western grammar, nor does it have any reason to. While perhaps strange, ない is still a verbal, and as such also has a series of bases that can be used to further conjugate:

未然形	なく
連用形	なく
連体形	ない
已然形	なけれ

This negative is slightly longer than using ぬ/ん, and as such is somewhat less impolite. Since ない is a normal adjective like any other, this negative form can be made more polite simply by adding です, which places any verbal adjective in a polite form.

2.2.1.1.3. Polite negative

Even though ない is less informal than ぬ, it is still considered informal. The formal negative is to take the polite version of a verb, created by taking the

verb's 連用形 and adding ます, and then turning ます into a negative: take its 未然形 and combined it with ん. ます is somewhat special in that it cannot take ない as negation, so ません is entirely possible, while ませない is not. ます will be treated in more detail in the 連用形 section.

2.2.1.1.4. Negative perfect

You will know the English "perfect" form of verbs as the "-ing" form of a verb, or "-ed/-en" form for past tense, such as "to be eating/ having eaten" or "to be walking/ having walked", with the negation using the word "not": "not eating / not having eaten" and "not walking / not having walked" respectively.

In Japanese this perfect form works slightly different. The normal perfect uses a 連用形 construction, while the negative perfect uses the 未然形 paired with the 連用形 of the previously mentioned classical helper verb of negation, ぬ. As will be explained in the 連用形 section, verbals in 連用形 can also function as a noun, which means that (perhaps curiously) the Japanese negative perfect actually acts as noun and can even be used adverbially by using に as with any noun adjective that is used adverbially. To illustrate this, an example:

> 食(た)べずに来(き)ました。
> [I] came without eating.

Here, 食べる (meaning "to eat") has been put into negative noun form, 食べず, and has been combined with the particle に, which in this particular case stands for something similar to the preposition "as". If we look at the literal decomposition of the above sentence, we see the following:

> as "not eating", [I] have come.

It must be reminded this is a very literal decomposition, and that に does not literally translate to "as". It is merely a marker that in this negative construction indicates the way in which something is done. Thus, "coming" has been performed in a "not eating" way. In a normal translation this would simply be "coming without eating", or "coming while not having eaten" or the likes.

This 連用形 way of making negative verb constructions is, perhaps because it's more complex than normal negation, considered quite elegant. It is important to remember that when using this version of the negative to work in conjunction with another verb, you cannot omit the particle に (it is possible to omit the に using this as a purely subordinate sentence, but this will be explained in the 連用形 section).

2.2.1.1.5. Additional examples

Examples for 五段 verbs for the aforementioned inflections:

verb	*classical negation*	*negative perfect*	*informal negation*	*polite negation*
買(か)う, buy	買わ + ん	買わ + ず	買わ + ない	買い + ません
歩(ある)く, walk	歩か + ん	歩か + ず	歩か + ない	歩き + ません
泳(およ)ぐ, swim	泳が + ん	泳が + ず	泳が + ない	泳ぎ + ません
話(はな)す, talk	話さ + ん	話さ + ず	話さ + ない	話 + しません
待(ま)つ, wait	待た + ん	待た + ず	待た + ない	待ち + ません
済(す)む, end	済ま + ん	済ま + ず	済ま + ない	済み + ません
遊(あそ)ぶ, play	遊ば + ん	遊ば + ず	遊ば + ない	遊び + ません
死(し)ぬ, die	死な + ん	死な + ず	死な + ない	死に + ません
分(わ)かる understand	分から + ん	分から + ず	分から + ない	分かり + ません

Examples for 一段 verbs for the aforementioned inflections:

verb	*classical negation*	*negative perfect*	*informal negation*	*polite negation*
見(み)る, see	見 + ん	見 + ず	見 + ない	見 + ません
寝(ね)る, sleep	寝 + ん	寝 + ず	寝 + ない	寝 + ません
伸(の)びる, stretch	伸び + ん	伸び + ず	伸び + ない	伸び + ません
食(た)べる, eat	食べ + ん	食べ + ず	食べ + ない	食べ + ません

Examples for the irregular verbs for the aforementioned inflections:

verb	*classical negation*	*negative perfect*	*informal negation*	*polite negation*
する, to do	せ + ん	せ + ず	し + ない	し + ません
来(く)る, to come	こ + ん	こ + ず	こ + ない	き + ません

Examples for the special verbs for the aforementioned inflections:

verb	*classical negation*	*negative perfect*	*informal negation*	*polite negation*
ある, be	あら + ん	あら + ず	ない	あり + ません
です	じゃ + ん		じゃ + ない	じゃ + あり + ません
			では + ない	では + あり + ません
ます	ませ + ん			

It should be noted that the classical negation is very rarely used, but even when it is, せん and こん are only really used in dialects such as ones found in the Kansai region of Japan (the area around the Oosaka-Koube-Kyouto triangle in the Kinki prefecture).

2.2.1.2. (ra)reru - (ら)れる

The helper verbs -れる for 五段 and -られる for 一段 verbs are used to create 3 possible meanings, being the passive form of verbs, the (long) potential form of verbs, and a form of honorific. These helper verbs are both 一段 verbs, so they themselves conjugate as follows.

	られる	れる
未然形	-られ	-れ
連用形	-られ	-れ
連体形	-られる	-れる
已然形	-られれ	-れれ
命令形	-られ	-れ

2.2.1.2.1. Passive - 受身（うけみ）

A passive verb describes a state of the world, rather than describing some action taking place in it. For instance, in "I throw a ball" the verb "throw" is active, describing an action, but in "A ball is being thrown", rather than directly describing an action, the state of the world, as far as the ball is concerned, is being described. "The cat ate the food" versus "The food was eaten by the cat" is another example of active vs. passive verb form.

In Japanese this form is created by adding れる to the 未然形 of 五段 verbs, and られる to the 未然形 of 一段 verbs.

買う	買わ + れる
歩く	歩か + れる
泳ぐ	泳が + れる
話す	話さ + れる
待つ	待た + れる
済む	済ま + れる
遊ぶ	遊ば + れる
死ぬ	死な + れる
分かる	分から + れる
見る	見 + られる
寝る	寝 + られる
伸びる	伸び + られる
食べる	食べ + られる
する	either せ+られる or さ+れる
来る	こ+られる

2.2.1.2.2. Passive form of bother - 迷惑(めいわく)の受身

This is a refinement of the passive form, and is used to indicate that something has happened (typically caused by someone) that is in general an unpleasant occurrence. For instance, if your brother's bicycle has been stolen, you can say two things in Japanese. Of course you could say "My brother's bicycle has been stolen", but you can also use a passive construction to say "My brother had his bicycle bestolen." This is not grammatical English, but it is grammatical Japanese:

弟(おとうと)の自転車(じてんしゃ)が盗(ぬす)んでいます。
My brother's bicycle has been stolen.

弟が自転車を盗まれました。
"My brother had his bicycle bestolen".

For this passive form, the indirect object, or indirect verb actor, is indicated by に:

弟が誰(だれ)かに自転車を盗まれました。
"My brother had his bicycle bestolen by someone."

2.2.1.2.3. Potential - 可能(かのう)

Another thing this form can signify is the (long) potential of a verb. The potential form of a verb in western languages is typically constructed using the auxiliary verb "can", but in Japanese this is a conjugation (or rather, two conjugations) instead:

泳(およ)ぐ: to swim
泳がれる: to be able to swim

見(み)る: to see
見られる: to be able to see.

An important thing to note is that the irregular verb する has a -(ら)れる form, but that this cannot be interpreted as a potential form. Instead, the verb 出来る, "to be able to do", is used when one wishes to express the potential form of する.

This form is called the "long" potential form, and is primarily used for 一段 verbs. For 五段 a much more commonly used potential form is the "short" form, arising from the 連用形 and the helper verb 得る; we will discuss this form in more detail in the 連用形 section.

A thing to note is that in their potential form, transitive verbs technically turn into intransitive verbs. However, quite often the direct object particle を will be heard used in combination with these verbs, rather than the subject particle が. While strictly speaking ungrammatical, this is a matter for "what feels right" and is therefore considered correct speech regardless of what the grammatical rules dictate in this case.

Also on a final note, people are dropping the ら from られる these days when creating a potential form akin to the “short potential” form of the 五段(ごだん) verbs.

2.2.1.2.4. Honorific - 敬語(けいご)

While the same as the passive and potential in form, the honorific is something that many people have difficulty with. In honorific form, the verb doesn't actually change meaning at all, but only becomes honorific in respects to whom or what it describes. For instance:

石田(いしだ)さんのお父(とう)さんが来(き)ました。
Ishida's father has arrived.

石田さんのお父さんが来(こ)られました。
Ishida's father has arrived.

The meaning of the verb has not changed at all, but in the second sentence, Ishida's father is being spoken about in an honorific manner. This unchanged meaning of a verb even though it's been inflected trips up a lot of people, since the idea that a verb can mean the exact same thing while being more or less polite, or more or less honorific or humbling, is something that doesn't exist in a lot of western languages.

2.2.1.2.5. Additional examples

ご飯(はん)は食(た)べられました。

passive	Dinner has been eaten. (likely meaning)
bother	[Someone] has eaten [my] dinner [and that wasn't the way it was supposed to be, so it's a bother]. (possible meaning)
potential	[Someone] could have eaten dinner. (unlikely meaning)
honorific	[Someone] ate their dinner. (possible meaning)

来(こ)られますか。

passive	(improbable meaning)
bother	(improbable meaning)
potential	Will [someone] be able to come? (likely meaning)
honorific	Will [someone] come? (likely meaning)

パフェが作(つく)られます。

passive	Parfaits are being made. (possible meaning)
bother	(impossible meaning)
potential	[I] can make parfaits (likely meaning)
honorific	[Someone] makes parfaits. (unlikely meaning)

2.2.1.3. (sa)seru - (さ)せる

This form is used to express the causative form of verbs. In English this is generally expressed as "make [someone] do [something]" and indicates an involuntary action. This is done in Japanese by adding させる or せる in the same way as (ら)れる is added to the 未然形 to form the passive. Like (ら)れる, (さ)せる follows the 一段 scheme:

	させる	せる
未然形	-させ	-せ
連用形	-させ	-せ
連体形	-させる	-せる
已然形	-させれ	-せれ
命令形	-させ	-せ

As mentioned, the way these two helper verbs are added is identical to the way (ら)れる is added:

買う	買わ + せる
歩く	歩か +せる
泳ぐ	泳が + せる
話す	話さ + せる
待つ	待た + せる
済む	済ま + せる
遊ぶ	遊ば + せる
死ぬ	死な + せる
分かる	分から + せる
見る	見 + させる
寝る	寝 + させる
伸びる	伸び + させる
食べる	食べ + させる
する	さ + せる
来る	こ + させる

お母(かあ)さんが子供(こども)に朝(あさ)ご飯(はん)を食(た)べさせました。
Their mother made the children eat breakfast.

Some more examples:

待(ま)たせたね。
[I] made you wait, [didn't I]?

妹(いもうと) に起(お)こさせました。
[I] had [my] (younger) sister wake me up.

2.2.1.4. Causative passive - (さ)せられる

The title sounds like a combination of the causative and the passive, and that's essentially what it is. It's long, and its use is not rare. In English this form reads "have been made to do ..." and is also quite long. So, just like in most western language, the more nuance you want to place in your verb conjugation, the longer it'll get:

子供(こども)がお母(かあ)さんに朝(あさ)ご飯(はん)を食(た)べさせられました。
The children were made to eat breakfast by their mother.

先生(せんせい)に 宿題(しゅくだい) をやり直(なお)させられました。
[I] had been made to redo [my] homework by [the] teacher.

2.2.1.5. Pseudo-futurum

This form is used for three things, which are called the presumptive ("it's probably the case that..."), the dubitative ("will/shall ...?") and the cohortative ("let's ...").

2.2.1.5.1. Dubitative/cohortative

These forms, as mentioned in the outline for Japanese, turn the 未然形 into something that ends on an お sound, through a contraction. There's both a normal and a polite form of this construction, with the polite form simply being the verb in polite form, with ます turned into a pseudo futurum. The way the direct pseudo futurum is constructed differs for the two verb classes: 五段 verbs get う added to the 未然形, but this leads to a contractions where あ+う to becomes a long お sounds. For 一段 verbs, we add よう to the 未然形 and, for the irregular verbs and copulas we see special cases:

	forming the pseudo-futurum	*pseudo-futurum*	*polite pseudo-futurum*
買う	買 [わ → お] + う	買おう	買い + ましょう
歩く	歩 [か → こ] + う	歩こう	歩き + ましょう
泳ぐ	泳 [が → ご] + う	泳ごう	泳ぎ + ましょう
話す	話 [さ → そ] + う	話そう	話し + ましょう
待つ	待 [た → と] + う	待とう	待ち + ましょう
済む	済 [ま → も] + う	済もう	済み + ましょう
遊ぶ	遊 [ば → ぼ] + う	遊ぼう	遊び + ましょう
死ぬ	死 [な → の] +う	死のう	死に + ましょう
分かる	分か [ら → ろ] + う	分かろう	分かり + ましょう
見る	見 + よう	見よう	見 + ましょう
寝る	寝 + よう	寝よう	寝 + ましょう
伸びる	伸び + よう	伸びよう	伸び + ましょう
食べる	食べ + よう	食べよう	食べ + ましょう
する	し + よう	しよう	し + ましょう
くる	こ + よう	こよう	き + ましょう
だ・です		だろう	でしょう
ます		ましょう	

Some examples to show its use

海(うみ)に行(い)こう。
Let's go to the beach.

海に行こうか。
Shall [we] go to the beach?

どこでしょうか?
Where could it be?

あの本(ほん)は面白(おもしろ)いでしょうか。
[I] wonder if that book [over there] is interesting.

そうしましょう。
Let's do so.

2.2.1.5.2. Presumptive

The presumptive form uses the pseudo-futurum of the copula (だ/です) to turn verbs into presumed acts, with the pseudo-futurum for だ being だろう, and the pseudo-futurum for です being でしょう. While this form uses the 未然形 of the copula verb, the verb conjugation itself is actually technically a 連体形 conjugation, and therefore is explained in more detail in the section on 連体形. For now, it suffices to say that it lets us say things like "This computer will probably still work" or "I am sure my coffee isn't cold yet" and similar presumptive statements in Japanese:

コーヒーはもう冷(さ)めただろう。
The coffee's probably cold by now.

2.2.1.5.3. The pseudo-futurum + と + verbs

One of the special things about the pseudo-futurum is that when combined with several verbs, the intuitive meaning isn't always preserved. We can distinguish at least the two cases for using the pseudo-futurum with とする and と思(おも)う.

While [...]+と+する means "to consider something [...]", when paired with the pseudo-futurum, the meaning changes to "at the point of doing [...]":

ご飯を食べようとしたら、電話(でんわ)がかかってきた。
As [we] were about to eat, the phone rang.

On its own, 思う means "to think", but used with the pseudo-futurum the construction becomes more nuanced, and expressing "thinking about":

手紙(てがみ)を書(か)こうと思(おも)います。
[I]'m thinking about writing a letter.

2.2.1.5.4. Negative pseudo-futurum

Since the pseudo-futurum doesn't quite end on a new verb that can be placed in a 未然形, creating the negative form cannot be done using ぬ or ない. Instead, the negative pseudo-futurum uses the classical helper verb まい. Unlike 一段 verbs, 五段 verbs use the 連用形 as a basis for negative pseudo-futurum, which explains the polite negative pseudo-futurum form for 一段 verbs (using the 五段 helper verb of politeness, ます):

	negative pseudo-futurum	*polite negative pseudo-futurum*
見る	見 + まい	見 + ます + まい
寝る	寝 + まい	寝 + ます + まい
伸びる	伸び + まい	伸び + ます + まい
食べる	食べ + まい	食べ + ます + まい

Examples of use are easy to give, but this is a pattern that you will likely not hear too often, as there are other constructions that express negative expectations which are used more frequently.

その映画(えいが)を見(み)ようか見まいか。
Should [I] go see that movie, or not see that movie...

どうしても伸(の)びまい。
That shouldn't stretch regardless of what [you] do.

2.2.2. Renyoukei - 連用形(れんようけい)

The 連用形 is used to (con)join all manner of clauses. It can join verbs to form conjugations or compound verbs, it can join up sentences to form compound sentences, and can even turn verbs or adjectives into nouns which can be used like any other in noun phrases. This makes the 連用形 a very important base, and it has quite a number of conjugations and constructions that use it.

2.2.2.1. Conjunction

2.2.2.1.1. Sentences

One of the things the 連用形 can do is join up sentences. As mentioned in the outline, normal Japanese single sentences typically end on a verb. If we look at two of these sentences:

友達(ともだち)のサイトを見(み)つけました。
[I] discovered [my] friend's web site.

とてもすてきだと思(おも)います。
[I] think it's very nice.

we can join up these two sentences by letting the first sentence end in 連用形 instead, and then simply running the whole thing as one sentence:

友達のサイトを見つけ、とてもすてきだと思います。
[I] discovered my friend's web site [and I] think it's very nice.

The Japanese comma is not strictly required, but makes it easier to read (clearly in spoken speech you won't have a comma). When translating this kind of conjoined sentence, one can usually either use a comma, or the conjunction word "and". However, it should be noted that the real meaning is just a comma: since this construction creates a sentence where the second part of the full sentence is merely a continuation of a story started in the first part, there is no real "and" to speak of. Typically in English the word "and" will look like it belongs there, but you must remember that the Japanese sentence only faintly implies it.

2.2.2.1.2. Verbals

Aside from sentences, the 連用形 can also conjoin verbs and verbal adjectives with other verbs, verbal adjectives, and even nouns.

2.2.2.1.2.1. Verb/verb

The most common conjunction is the verb/verb conjunction. This takes two verbs, and forms a compound verb with them, by placing the first verb in 連用形 and combining it with the second verb in its normal form. There are plenty of examples to choose from for this type of conjunction:

飛(と)ぶ - to fly
出(だ)す - to take out
飛び出す - to come flying out

歩(ある)く - to walk
回(まわ)る - to go round
歩き回る - to walk in circles

When verbs are conjoined this way, it is quite common for the okurigana (the hiragana that indicates inflection on verbs and verbal adjectives) of the first verb to be removed:

飛び出す may be written as 飛出す
歩き回る may be written as 歩回る

A lot of the time compound verbs created this way have a meaning which is readily guessable, but sometimes the compound verb is one that's been in use for ages and its meaning has changed over time. This is a good reminder that while the grammar explains forms, it doesn't necessarily readily explain the semantics. Be careful when creating your own compound verbs - it's not unlikely you'll come up with a combination that already means something else in some (sometimes not so subtle) way.

There are a few special verbs which when used in this compound fashion add a specific meaning to the compound. These are:

・直(なお)す - fix, correct, repair, cure

Used as second verb in a verb/verb compound, this verb creates a "to re-[...]" verb, such as:

書(か)き直す, from 書く, to write, means "to rewrite"
やり直す, from やる, to do, means "to redo"

・込(こ)む - crowd, fill up, go into, enter

This verb helps create compound verbs that call forth a mental image of something going into something else, such as something being filled up, something entering something else, or even something being invested in something else. Examples of this are:

入(はい)り込む, from 入る, "to enter", means "to go into [someone's house/room]"
巻(ま)き込む from 巻く, "to roll/wind", means "to become involved with/entangled in"

・切(き)る - cut

Used in compounds, 切る can mean anything from to cut physically to cutting conceptually, such as cutting off someone's speech, cutting a meeting short, or doing something and nothing but that something (which can be thought of as cutting off any other option). A few examples are:

> 言い切る, from 言う, "to say", means "to declare" or "assert". i.e., say something and cut off further discussion.
> 分かり切る, from 分かる, "to understand", means "to fully understand".

- 出す - come out

When used in compounds, 出す indicates something of the inverse of 込む, signifying something is going or coming out of something else. This can be objects from a container, words from a mouth, or even thoughts from a cloudy mind:

> 思い出す, from 思う, "to think", means "to suddenly remember", signifying thoughts coming out of murky memory
> 言い出す, from 言う, "to say", means "to break the ice" i.e. "to start talking"

2.2.2.1.2.2. Verb/adjective

There are a three adjectives that are commonly used in verb/adjective compounds, and they're 易い, 難い and 難い, used to mean "easy to ..." and "hard to ..." (twice). For instance, if a book is easy to read, then this can be said in Japanese by combining the verb for reading, 読む, with the adjective easy, 易い, to form 読み易い, meaning "easy to read". In English this is a noun phrase, but in Japanese this is still an adjective, and can be used to describe objects, such as for instance:

> 読み易い本。
> An easy to read book.

> 言い難い事。
> Something that is hard to say.
> (lit: a hard-to-say thing)

Unlike the verb/verb conjunctions, this type of conjugation does not drop the okurigana. Also, while both にくい and がたい signify "hard to ...", にくい is a more modern reading; most things that are "hard to ..." in modern Japanese will use the にくい reading. Examples of the がたい reading are found in for instance

有り難い, which is common known paired with the verb ございます to become ありがとうございます (thank you).

2.2.2.1.2.3. Verb/noun

This conjunction is a very nice one, because it shows an elementary simplicity in the creation of some of Japanese's nouns. Examples of this form of conjunction are:

> 着物, meaning kimono, coming from 着る meaning "to wear", and 物 meaning "thing".
> 乗り場, meaning stop (like a bus stop or train stop), comes from 乗る meaning "to get on", and 場 meaning "place".

2.2.2.2. Conjugation

With all this conjunction going on, you'd almost forget that the 連用形 is used for far more. Almost, if it were possible to ignore these conjugation forms, but one can't. They dominate the Japanese language, so they definitely deserve attention.

2.2.2.2.1. Polite form - ます

One of the important constructions that the 連用形 is used for is to place verbs in a polite form, using the helper verb of politeness, ます. This is a classical verb that has its own set of bases that are somewhat deviant from what is used today:

未然形	ませ (ましょ)
連用形	まし
連体形	ます
已然形	ますれ
命令形	ませ (まし)

Of these forms, only the 未然形 and 連体形 are used frequently, with the 命令形 typically being used for formal commands, such as a store keeper yelling "いらっしゃいませ" at its customers as they come in, literally translating to "come".

To turn a verb polite, the 連用形 of a verb is suffixed with the following forms, to effect the corresponding inflections:

	affirmative	*negative*
present	ます	ません
past	ました	ませんでした

You may notice that the past negative form relies on the copula verb です for its past tense. This is the only verb for which this is the case, and temporal inflection using です is further reserved for nouns and the very classical verb べし (so classical that it doesn't fit any word class from modern Japanese, treated in the particles, nominaliser section).

2.2.2.2.2. Short potential

The short potential form is called "short" because it is simply a lot shorter than the full 未然形+(ら)れる version of the potential. However, in modern Japanese this construction only exists for 五段 verbs. For 一段 verbs, the only grammatically correct potential form is the られる potential form.

To create the short potential form, the 連用形 is paired with the verb 得(え)る, "to aquire", to express an "attainable" form of verbs. For 五段 verbs this means that the final い-row syllable of the 連用形 contracts with the え sound from 得る to become an え-row syllable instead. As an example:

読(よ)む, "to read", becomes 読み+得る becomes 読[みぇ]る becomes 読める.

While this construction normally leads to contractions, there are a few verbs that have never been used contracted, such as ありえる for the existential 五段 verb ある, or 起(お)こりえる for the 五段 verb 起こる, "to occur". Interestingly, this Chinese influenced potential can also be seen in certain modern 一段 verbs, such as 見(み)える, "to (be able to) see", or 煮(に)える, "to (be able to) boil".

Just like with the 未然形 potential form, verbs placed in this short potential form become intransitive, which means that technically they can only be used in relation to subjects, and no longer in relation to direct objects, meaning that all potential verbs take が rather than を. However, again, in real life this is a matter of "what feels right", and を is often accepted as sounding proper even though grammatically one should be using が.

五段 verb	*short potential form*
買(か)う	買える
歩(ある)く	歩ける
泳(およ)ぐ	泳げる
話(はな)す	話せる
待(ま)つ	待てる
済(す)む	済める

遊(あそ)ぶ	遊べる
死(し)ぬ	死ねる
分(わ)かる	分かれる
ある	あり + える

As mentioned in the 未然形 section, する has no potential inflection, and the verb 出来(できる) is used instead.

2.2.2.2.3. Past tense - た

The direct past tense for verbs is created using the classical helper verb of past tense, た. Being a classical verb, it too has a few bases, but the 連用形 and 命令形 are missing, because of the nature of the verb:

未然形	たろ
連体形	た
已然形	たら

The past tense for 一段 verbs and 五段 verbs differ slightly: for 一段 verbs, the plain past tense is formed by adding た directly to the 連用形. For 五段 verbs, contractions occur when た is added to the 連用形 according to set rules. The rules for these contraction changes are:

- Verbs ending on -く/-ぐ end on -いた/-いだ respectively in their plain past tense.
- Verbs ending on -す end on -した in their plain past tense.
- Verbs ending on -つ/-る/-う all end on -った in their plain past tense.
- Verbs ending on -ぬ/-ぶ/-む all end on -んだ in their plain past tense.

The exception to this rule is with the verb 行(いく), which instead of becoming 行いた becomes 行った:

> ヨーロッパに行った事(こと)がありますか。
> Have [you] ever been to Europe?

It should also be noted that the plain counterpart to です, だ, has an unexpected plain past tense だった.

> どうだった？
> How was it?

> コンサートは先週(せんしゅう)だった。

The concert was last week.

But there's more. The helper verb た is itself somewhat of a 五段 verb in the sense that it can be placed in a pseudo-futurum form using the 未然形 + う to construct something that means "will probably have ...":

本(ほん)はもう読(よ)んだろう。
[He] probably already read the book.

Also, it has an 已然形, so we can also use it to construct a past tense hypothetical, "should [someone] have done [verb], ...":

町(まち)を歩(ある)いたら、面白(おもしろ)い見物(みもの)をいっぱい見(み)ます。
Should [you] walk around town, [you] will see many interesting sights.

This means that our list of example verbs looks as follows when put in plain past tenses:

	plain past tense	*plain past pseudo-futurum*	*plain past hypothetical*
買う	買った	買ったろう	買ったら
歩く	歩いた	歩いたろう	歩いたら
泳ぐ	泳いだ	泳いだろう	泳いだら
話す	話した	話したろう	話したら
待つ	待った	待ったろう	待ったら
済む	済んだ	済んだろう	済んだら
遊ぶ	遊んだ	遊んだろう	遊んだら
死ぬ	死んだ	死んだろう	死んだら
分かる	分かった	分かったろう	分かったら
見る	見た	見たろう	見たら
寝る	寝た	寝たろう	寝たら
伸びる	伸びた	伸びたろう	伸びたら
食べる	食べた	食べたろう	食べたら
する	した	したろう	したら
来る	きた	きたろう	きたら
行く	いった	いったろう	いったら
です	でした	でしたろう	でしたら
だ	だった	だったろう	だったら
ます	ました	ましたろう	ましたら

The negative past tense is formed by placing the verb in plain negative form first, and then turning this negative into a past tense, forming -なかった (see the verbal adjective section, past tense).

Remember that verbs that in their normal form indicate a process, like "become" or "to rise" in past tense actually represent an achieved state. For instance:

日(ひ)が出(で)た。
The sun's come up.

While the past tense of the verb 出る in Japanese, the translation is actually present tense (present perfect progressive to be exact), because 出る means "to rise" (in this case), and once the act of rising is completed, the effect is that the sun's up in the present, and will remain up until it starts to 沈(しず)む, set. An alternate translation, to match up verb tenses between Japanese and English, would be "The sun has risen", but you must be careful not to translate too literal: while this translation is now also 'past tense', the Japanese meaning is only the past tense of a process, leading to the present tense of a state. There is nothing wrong with translating this present tense state as a present tense English construction.

2.2.2.2.4. The て form

the -て form of verbs is used for at least three things in Japanese, of which verb chaining is probably the most encountered one. Aside from this, it can also be used to issue negative imperatives, or can be used in combination with several special verbs to create special constructions. What it cannot be used for is the verbal gerund. I say this, because many people claim that the て form is the Japanese version of the gerund, which is simply not true.

2.2.2.2.4.1. What is the gerund?

The "gerund" or "gerundive" form of a verb, is that form of a verb when it is written as verb, but used as if it's a noun. For instance, compare the following two simple English sentences:

"Whistling, I walked to school."
"I love whistling."

In the first sentence, "whistling" describes an act being performed. This is what verbs are used for, so there is nothing remarkable about this use of the verb "whistling"; it's a verb being used as a verb. In the second sentence however, "whistling" doesn't indicate an act being performed, but is used as a noun describing the act of whistling. We can see that this second sentence is using a verb as if it's a noun by simply replacing it with one:

"Chalk, I walked to school."

"I love chalk."

The first sentence makes no real sense, but the second sentence is still a perfectly grammatical sentence.

This "using a verb as if it's a noun" concept is what is called the "gerund". Whenever someone talks about a gerund, they mean a noun-used verb (provided they use the term properly). In Japanese there are two ways to turn a verb into nouns, one of which is a verb form, and the other a nominalisation through the use of nominaliser particles. The verb form construction involves placing a verb in 連用形, but this creates a verb-derived noun, creating nouns like the English nouns "[a] walk" or "[a] frame". The second way to create nouns from verbs involves explicitly nominalising the verb, using a nominaliser such as the particle の:

歩(ある)くのは好(す)きです。
[I] like walking.

In this sentence, the gerund "walking" maps to the clause 歩くの, not the verb 歩く. So as you can see, the gerund form has nothing to do with the て form in the slightest. Of course, while sentences may have a verb that ends on "-ing", such as:

歩いて学校(がっこう)へ行(い)った。
Walking, I went to school.

Sentences like these do not contain a gerund just because there is a verb in "-ing" form in the translation. The English translation for this sentence (and really only the translation) uses a present progressive, as it indicates an act being performed. In Japanese this isn't a progressive per se, as the て form on its own does not have any inherent inflection, as we will see in a moment.

2.2.2.2.4.2. Verb action chaining

An important skill to have is to be able to chain verb actions. If you want to express going to school and starting class in one sentence, then you're going to have to know how to do this. Luckily, the way to do so isn't very complicated, and uses the classical helper verb of completion つ. This verb contracts in the same way that た does when used with 五段 verbs, and has its own bases:

未然形	て
連用形	て
連体形	つる
已然形	つれ
命令形	てよ

But of these, only the 連用形 is really used. This should tip you off as to what this verb does: it conjoins sentences. However, unlike a plain verb 連用形 this construction preserves the order in which the verb actions occur:

朝ご飯を食べて、学校に行って、授業に出ました。
[I] had breakfast, went off to school and went to class.

学校に行って、授業に出て、朝ご飯を食べました。
[I] went off to school, went to class and had breakfast.

These are two very different ways of spending one's morning you have to admit. You may have noticed that only the last verb in the sentence has an inflection that indicates affirmative/negative and present/past. This is a consequence of using て - it indicates verb completion, but it doesn't indicate in which way it's been completed. To indicate the particular completion, the last verb is placed in whichever form it should be, and this form then applies to all previous verbs in て form:

本を読んで音楽を聞きます。
[I] read a book and listen to music.

本を読んで音楽を聞きました。
[I] read a book and listened to music.

The negative て form is formed by placing the verb in plain negative form, first using 未然形 + ない, and then turning this negative into a て form, forming -なくて or -ないで (for more on this, see the verbal adjective section on chaining).

食べなくて帰りました。
食べないで帰りました。.
[I] didn't eat and went home.

This is similar to the use of 未然形+ず+に, meaning "without ..." but there is the subtle difference that this is still a verb form, while -ずに is technically adverbial. Chaining multiple affirmative and negative verb actions is possible, while ずに doesn't quite allow this:

食べなくて学校へ行ってバスを乗らなくて着きました。
食べないで学校へ行ってバスを乗らないで着きました。
[I] didn't eat, went to school, didn't take the bus and arrived.

This sentence can just as well be translated as "I went to school without eating and arrived without taking the bus." but the nuance is different from the sentence

食べずに学校へ行ってバスを乗らずに着きました。

Which expresses the same as this "without ..." translation. In the て form sentence, we're chaining four different actions, while in the -ずに sentence we're actually listing two actions, both of which are adverbially constrained.

2.2.2.2.4.3. Negative imperative

The て form can also be used to create a negative imperative construction, where imperative should be read to mean the same thing it means in phrases like "It is imperative that we locate this item", and in English is seen in for instance things like "you cannot leave", in which 'cannot' doesn't apply to someone's ability to leave or not, but to the gravity of the situation. This construction is created by adding the particle は to the て form, followed by a negative expression, such as 駄目(だめ) ("no good") or いけない ("won't do"):

行(い)かなくては駄目(だめ)。
[You] cannot stay.
(lit: you cannot not-go)

This form is not as strong as a 命令形, and shouldn't be translated with "must" or "should".

2.2.2.2.4.4. Special て form conjugations

There are also several verbs which have special roles when used in conjunction with a て form. These verbs, of which 下(くだ)さる, ある, いる, 来(く)る, 行(い)く, 置(お)く, 見(み)る and しまう are the most important, don't simply chain up with the verb in て form, but also subtly change meaning.

2.2.2.2.4.4.1. - て下(くだ)さい

This is the formal request, which will be treated in more detail when treating verbs for giving and receiving. For now it suffices to say that using て+下(くだ)さい turns a verb into a polite command:

窓(まど)を開(あ)けて下さい。
Please open the window.

食(た)べて下さい。
Please eat [this].

2.2.2.2.4.4.2. - ている / てある

Combining the て form with ある and いる profoundly changes the verb's meaning in terms of its grammatical role. Using these two verbs as helper verbs lets us turn any verb into a resultant state, present progressive form or habitual act, depending on whether the verb was transitive or intransitive, and whether we use ある or いる. The table of which combinations can imply which construction is as follows:

	て+ある	*て+いる*
transitive	1. Resultant state (implying something or someone caused the state)	1. Habitual 2. Progressive
intransitive	(impossible combination)	1. Habitual 2. Progressive 3. Resultant state

Looking at the table, we see that the て+ある form is used to indicate that something is in a particular state, and that this state was caused by someone or something. Examples of this "resultant state" are for instance:

> 窓(まど)が開(あ)けてある。
> The window is [in an] opened [state] (because someone or something opened it).

> 車(くるま)が止(と)めてある。
> The car is [in a] stopped [state] (because someone or something stopped it).

This construction describes the state of something, just like a normal intransitive verb would, but implies that someone is responsible for this state, rather than merely describing it. The reason for this is the fact that a transitive verb is used as basis: a transitive verb (or active verb) describes an action being preformed by something or someone. Thus, even if the something or someone that performs the verb is left off, the fact that a transitive verb was used is on itself enough to tell us that something or someone must have performed it.

On the other hand, the resultant state that is created using the て+いる form does not imply this additional "someone did it". Instead, because it uses an intransitive verb: an intransitive verb (or passive verb) merely passively describes the current state of the world without any implications of how it might have come to be this way:

> 窓が開いている。
> The window is [in an] opened [state].

車が止まっている。
The car is [in a] stopped [state].

One principle difference is that while て+ある operates on transitive verbs for resultant state, て+いる operates on intransitive verbs. Another difference is that while て+ある can only be used to create a resultant state, て+いる can also be used to create the progressive verb form, as well as indicate a habitual action. Both these forms can be made with either transitive or intransitive verbs:

いま映画(えいが)を見(み)ています。
[I] am watching a movie right now. (transitive progressive)

よく新聞(しんぶん)を読(よ)んでいます。
[I] frequently read the newspaper. (transitive habitual act)

窓が開いています。
The window is opening. (intransitive progressive)

そのドアがよく軋(きし)っています。
That door often creaks. (intransitive habitual)

To make sure there's no mistakes possible: て+ある/て+いる can both do resultant state, but they operate on transitive/intransitive respectively: "*A*ru, tr*A*nsitive,*I*ru,*I*ntransitive". In addition to this, て+いる can also signify progressive state and habitual form of any verb.

Colloquially, the て+いる form is often shortened by dropping the い, to create て+る instead. This means that the following two sentences are technically the same, but the first is formal, and the second less formal:

何(なに)をしていますか。
何をしてますか。
What are [you] doing?

2.2.2.2.4.4.3. -てくる / -ていく (-てゆく)

Another important pair is the て+くる(来る)/て+いく(行く) pair, where いく is sometimes written or pronounced as ゆく instead (this is not wrong, but simply an alternate way to write/say 行く, used a lot in songs, poetry and many dialects). These two constructions stand for a gradual process directed either towards the speaker in some way, or heading away from the speaker in some way. This towards/away can be either a physical process or an abstract process such as "it feels like her mind is slowly slipping away":

春(はる)になってきた。
It's (gradually) become spring.

富士山(ふじさん)が見(み)えてきます。
Mt. Fuji is (gradually) coming into view.

夜(よる)になっていく。
It's (gradually) becoming night.

While the translation in this last sentence also uses 'becoming', because the verb いく is used, we can gather that this is something that is less desired than the evening that precedes it. Because this is phrased as if the process moves away from the speaker, a feeling of something that is less preferred is sketched.

When using this form, it is convention to write くる and いく, rather than 来る or 行く.

2.2.2.2.4.4.4. -ておく

Also important is the て+おく construction. On its own the verb 置(お)く means "to put [something] [somewhere]", but when paired with a verb in て form, it creates a construction meaning "to do something with the intention of leaving it that way [for whatever reason]". This may sound a bit cryptic, so let's look at an example for clarification:

電気(でんき)を付(つ)けておいて下(くだ)さい。
Please turn on the lights.

This sentence uses the て form of おく for a polite command (using 下さい), and asks for the lights to be turned on without there being a need for them to be on right now, other than it saving having to turn them on later. Literally this sentence would read "Please turn on the lights and leave them that way".

Colloquially, the combination of て+お is often changed to と instead, so the following two sentences are the same, except that the first is more formal, and the second more colloquial:

窓(まど)を開(あ)けておきます。
窓を開けときます。
[I]'ll open the windows [now, rather than later].

2.2.2.2.4.4.5. -てみる

Another construction that changes the meaning of the suffixed verb is the て+みる form. みる（見る）alone means "to see", but suffixed to て forms, this construction means "to do ... to see what it's like" or "to do ... to see what happens":

> 寿司(すし)を食(た)べてみませんか。
> Won't [you] try eating some sushi?

Here a negative question is asked as a more polite way of offering a suggestion, and the 食べてみます part stands for "trying to eat, to see what happens". In this case, the "to see what happens" is probably related to "seeing if you like it".

> 自転車(じてんしゃ)を乗(の)ってみましたが全然(ぜんぜん)だめでした。
> [I] tried to ride a bicycle, but that failed horribly. (lit: but [it] was no good at all)

Here the act of riding a bicycle was tried to see what would happen, but we can conclude from the remainder of the sentence that riding a bike isn't something reserved for this particular speaker.

2.2.2.2.4.4.6. -てしまう

The construction て+しまう is a very interesting construction. The closest English translations is "[completed verb action], sadly." such as "I finished reading 'the Lord of the rings', sadly" implying you wish you hadn't (maybe you wanted to read more, or maybe you didn't like it and didn't want to know how it ended, who knows). In Japanese, this actually uses a verb, しまう, which indicates verb completion, and connotes that the speaker would wish it hadn't been performed to completion.

> ああ、言(い)ってしまった.....
> Ah, *now* [you]'ve said it...
> (lit: ah, you've said it (even though it would have been better if you hadn't))

One can expect to hear something like this when you've pointed out something that everyone knows, but no one dares say because of the repercussions, like when you finally can't stand it anymore and tell your boss outright that everyone in the department is better suited for his job than he is.

> ラジオを壊(こわ)せてしまった。
> [I] broke the radio... (and that's definitely something I wish I hadn't).

In this line it should be obvious why the fact that 壊せる, to break, having been completed is a bad thing.

Colloquially, て + しまう can be contracted into ちまう or ちゃう, (with で + しまう contracting to じまう or じゃう respectively) resulting in for instance:

> あっ、教科書(きょうかしょ)を忘(わす)れちゃった。
> Ah! I forgot my textbook...

Again, it is clear that 忘れる, to forget, is a bad thing when completed, especially in relation to needing your textbook in class.

2.2.2.2.5. Representative verb action listing - たり

If, instead of chaining, you want to only list representative actions for which order doesn't matter, such as "Today I read my book, played some video games and walked the dog" in which you probably did all those things a few times in no real order, then the て form is of little use. Instead, the classical helper verb たり is the one you want to be working with. This verb has the following bases:

未然形	たら
連用形	たり
連体形	たり
已然形	たれ
命令形	たれ

Just like つ, the 連用形 of たり is used to list the verbs, and just like つ and た, the same contractions apply for conjugations between 五段 verbs and たり. However, unlike the て form, たり sequences don't just get their inflection from the last verb, but always are closed off with an inflection of する, meaning "to do":

> 今日(きょう)は学校(がっこう)に行(い)ったり、授業(じゅぎょう)に出(で)たり、ご飯(はん)を食(た)べたりしました。
> Today [I] went to school, went to class and ate.

This sentence literally reads "Today I did: going to school, going to class, eating", and shows why this is only listing representative actions - there is no way to distinguish which occurred when, when we're literally only listing what we did today.

Verbs in たり form can also be used on their own in a sentence, in which case it translates to "doing things such as", and still get closed off with する:

> 昨日(きのう)、本(ほん)を読(よ)んだりした。
> Yesterday [I] did things like reading a book.

(We see this use in a lot of listers, where a single use indicates a generalised case of the multiple instances)

The negative たり form is constructed by placing a verb in plain negative form first, and then turning this negative into a たり form, forming -なかったり (for more on this, see the verbal adjective section, representative listing).

2.2.2.2.6. Desire

We all have wants and needs, but where in many western languages we express the wants and needs of both first person, second person and third person with the same verb, in Japanese there is an important difference between the desires of oneself, and the desires of others. This is reflected in how one creates the desirative form, using -たい for first person, and -たがる when talking about the desires of others. However, there is also the distinction between desiring some verb action or process to take place, or for some state to be in effect. The first is described using the aforementioned たい and たがる, but the second uses the adjective ほしい, literally expressing "desire".

2.2.2.2.6.1. Ones own desire - たい

Unlike the previous constructions, -たい is actually an adjective (which has a kanji form, 度い, but this is not used in modern Japanese). Also, unlike the previous た, て and たり, this helper adjective doesn't contract, which makes forming the first person desirative very easy. Since this is an adjective it has a slightly different set of bases for further conjugation, but the way to create the desirative is still the 連用形 of a verb + たい:

未然形	たく
連用形	たく
連体形	たい
已然形	たけれ

買う	買い + たい
歩く	歩き + たい
泳ぐ	泳ぎ + たい
話す	話し + たい
待つ	待ち + たい
済む	済み + たい
遊ぶ	遊び + たい
死ぬ	死に + たい
分かる	分かり + たい

見る	見 + たい
寝る	寝 + たい
伸びる	伸び + たい
食べる	食べ + たい
する	し+ たい
来る	き + たい

You may have noticed that です and ます are not listed here. The absence of です is easy to explain because it is the copula, and one cannot want something to be a particular property in Japanese using the copula (this uses the adjective 欲しい, ほしい, instead). The absence of a たい form for ます is more subtle: there is no たい form for ます because using たい to express one's own desire is intrinsically selfish. The level of desire expressed purely by たい is comparable to a child saying they want a new toy, and keep saying it until you buy it. It's selfish, and at some point plain annoying. To make a statement that expresses desire that is less selfish, the Japanese use a construction that expresses "I think I want/would like to ...", which makes the actual desire less strong because it's only a thought, rather than a real desire:

新(あたら)しい車(くるま)を買(か)いたいと思(おも)います。
I think I would like to buy a new car.

This is a very civil way of expressing one's own desire, compared to the plain:

新しい車を買いたい。
I want to buy a new car.

Because たい is an adjective, it can also be followed by です to make it more polite, in which case the translation stays the same, but the perceived strength of the desire is tuned down just a bit, although not as much as when the desire is turned into a thought using と+思う.

新しい車を買いたいです。
I want to buy a new car.

To say one doesn't want something, たい is placed in a negative form, たくない:

今日(きょう)は何(なに)もしたくない。
I don't want to do anything today.

2.2.2.2.6.2. Other's desire - たがる

Because of the way Japanese works, and the way the world is interpreted and thought about in the Japanese mindset, one never presumes to truly know what's going on in someone else's head. Because of this, you cannot say that "Bob wants an apple", because even though he might give off all the signals that he does, and even though he may have said so himself, you might still be interpreting the signals wrong, and he might have only said he wanted one instead of really wanting one. Because of this the classical helper verb たがる is used instead. Like たい, this form does not suffer from contractions, and is added directly to the 連用形.

未然形	たがら / たがろ
連用形	たがり / たがつ
連体形	たがる
已然形	たがれ

買う	買い + たがる
歩く	歩き + たがる
泳ぐ	泳ぎ + たがる
話す	話し + たがる
待つ	待ち + たがる
済む	済み + たがる
遊ぶ	遊び + たがる
死ぬ	死に + たがる
分かる	分かり + たがる
見る	見 + たがる
寝る	寝 + たがる
伸びる	伸び + たがる
食べる	食べ + たがる
する	し+ たがる
来る	き + たがる

Again です and ます are missing. Not unlike たい, たがる can be considered somewhat rude as it presumes to know something about someone else. This construction can be made less rude by adding the noun adjective そう, to emphasise that this is merely an impression:

君子(きみこ)さんが出(で)たがるそうです。
It seems Kimiko wants to leave.

君子さんが出たがりそうです。
It seems Kimiko wants to leave.

Important to note is that the そう that comes after a 連体形 generally does not mean the same thing as one that comes after a 連用形. While a そう following a 連体形 expresses a form of hearsay, implying the information's been read somewhere or has been told to the speaker by someone, そう following a 連用形 expresses the concept of something "being at the point of ..." or "seeming to be ...". Due to the nature of たがる, both can be used, but they will still connote different things:

君子さんが出たがるそうです。
It seems Kimiko wants to leave (I know this because she for instance told us, or someone else told me).

君子さんが出たがりそうです。
It seems Kimiko wants to leave (this is my impression, because she's giving off all the signs of someone who'd want to leave).

The negative form for たがる is the normal verb negative, たがらない or たがりません

2.2.2.2.6.3. Desiring a particular state - 欲(ほ)しい

Unlike the previous two desirative forms, there is also the previously hinted at desire for something to be in a particular state. For instance "I want this door to be red" cannot be expressed with the previous two forms, because they cannot express this state, but can only express verb actions or processes. To express a state desirative, the て form paired with the adjective 欲しい, desire, is used:

このドアが赤(あか)くて欲しい。
[I] want this door red.

In terms of politeness 欲しい is just as direct and selfish as たい, and it can be softened by adding です or んです:

使(つか)って欲しい。
[I] want it made.

使って欲しいです。
[I] want it made (being said less direct than the above sentence)

使って欲しいんです。
[I] want it made ("There is a reason for me wanting this, it's not pure selfishness here, don't worry")

2.2.2.2.7. Impressions

As mentioned in the section on desire for たがる, そう can be used after a 連用形 to create an impression of something. In Japanese there are four main ways to express having an "impression" of something, being そう, みたい, よう and らしい, but of these only そう can be used with the 連用形 of verbs. The translation given in the previous section was "being at the point of ..." or "seeming to be ...", which is best illustrated with some examples:

> 鉛筆(えんぴつ)が落(お)ちそうです。
> The pencil looks like it's about to fall.

The operative verb, 落ちる, would mean "falls/will fall". In 連用形 + そう it means anything that expresses "looks like it could fall any moment".

> おばあさんはまだ歩(ある)けそうです。
> It looks like grandmother is still able to walk.

The operative verb, 歩ける, means "can walk / will be able to walk". In 連用形 + そう it means "looks like [...] will be able to walk".

Using 連用形 + そう to express an impression of something implies that the speaker is basing their opinion purely on on-the-spot evidence. In this sense, the certainty of the impression can swing either way, depending on how the situation changes.

There are two ways to form the negative for this construction, which connote different things:

a. Verb in 連用形 + そう + negation of the copula, じゃない, meaning "doesn't look like ..."
b. Verb in plain negative + そう meaning "looks like it's not ..."

To give an example of this difference, an affirmative sentence and its two possible negations:

> 雨(あめ)が降(ふ)りそうです。
> It looks like it's about to rain.
>
> 雨が降りそうじゃないです。
> It doesn't look like it's about to rain.
>
> 雨が降らなさそうです。
> It looks like it won't be raining

Note that ない becomes なさそう. This is a very important irregularity to remember, and will be explained further in the verbal adjective section on impression.

2.2.2.3. Forming nouns

A seemingly trivial function that the 連用形 fulfils is that it can turn verbs into nouns. This means that nearly any verb in Japanese will have a noun counterpart that has been derived directly from it. There are two ways in which to form nouns based on verbs, one being the plain noun form, and the other being the "way of doing [...]" noun form, something that is not very common in most western languages.

2.2.2.3.1. Plain nouns

The most basic form of a noun derived from a verb is just that. Example of these are readily available:

話す - talk　　話し - conversation
積もる - intend　積もり - intention
感じる - feel　　感じ - feeling

2.2.2.3.2. Way of doing ... - 方

A more subtle noun form is the "way of doing ..." noun form. For instance, "the way one reads" in English is a full noun phrase, but in Japanese it's a compound noun of a verb in 連用形 paired with the noun 方, pronounced かた in this use, and meaning "way". Thus, 読む meaning "read" becomes 読み方, meaning "way of reading".

お箸の使い方に慣れてない人に難しいです。
It's hard for people who aren't used to the "way of using" chopsticks

The verb "to use", 使う, is a transitive verb, and since transitive verbs have their direct object marked with を the subphrase "to use chopsticks" could be お箸を使う. However, since both お箸 and 使い方 are nouns, we can also choose to use の for linking it up. The difference is the following, noting the placement of the brackets:

[お箸を使い]方
The way in which one does "using chopsticks"

お箸の[使い方]
The "way of doing" for chopsticks

Both express the same idea, but the emphasis in the first sentence lies on the fact that it's about using chopsticks, while the emphasis in the second sentence lies with simply the "way of doing" of something, which in this case happens to be chopsticks.

2.2.3. Shuushikei - 終止形(しゅうしけい)

In classical Japanese, verbs had 6 bases, and the 連体形 was not used to close off sentences, but was only used as predicative form (kind of like adjectives now). Instead, for ending a sentence the 終止形 was used. This form is no longer used in modern Japanese, but if you want to learn about Japanese it doesn't hurt to know that it used to exist. You might even run across it when reading or hearing some semi-classical Japanese (sometimes purely used to sounds fancy).

2.2.4. Rentaikei - 連体形(れんたいけい)

This form is often called the dictionary form, because it's the way you will find verbs listed in the dictionary. It's typically claimed to be the present/future tense, but it's much more than that. As a predicative form, this form can end sentences, end predicates that can be used in a fashion similar to adjectives, and also serves as base for various conjugations and constructions.

2.2.4.1. Sentence ending

The form that the 連体形 is most known for is the fact that it's the sentence ending form. Think of any random sentence in plain present tense, and you'll have a 連体形 verb at the end.

2.2.4.2. Predicative

連体形 sentences can also be used in a fashion similar to adjectives:

コーヒーを飲(の)む。
To drink coffee.

コーヒーを飲む人(ひと)。
A person who drinks coffee.

Here "person" has been attributed "drinking coffee" merely by using the sentence ending on the verb's 連体形 as an adjectival clause to "person". The same goes for the negative, past tense and any other clause that technically ends on a 連体形:

コーヒーを飲まない人	"A person who doesn't drink coffee"
コーヒーを飲んだ人	"A person who drank coffee"
コーヒーを飲んだりする人	"A person who amongst other things drinks coffee"
コーヒーを飲もうとする人	"A person who is about to drink coffee"

Note that all these example use constructions that end on a 連体形:

コーヒーを飲まない人	Ends on ない, which is a 連体形.
コーヒーを飲んだ人	Ends on 飲んだ, which ends on the 連体形 of た.
コーヒーを飲んだりする人	Ends on する, which is a 連体形.
コーヒーを飲もうとする人	Also ends on する.

Any clause or sentence that ends on a 連体形 can be used in this way.

2.2.4.3. Conjugation

While sometimes forgotten, the 連体形 also serves as the basis for various conjugations, many of which are considered a 'plain form'.

2.2.4.3.1. Negative imperative

One of the things the 連体形 is used for is to issue a prohibition, or negative imperative, by adding the particle な:

> それを開(あ)けるな。
> Don't open that.

This is a very simple way to issue a negative imperative, and is the negative counterpart to the 命令形 (used here to mean commanding form, not commanding base) of verbs.

2.2.4.3.2. Plain presumptive

Combining the pseudo-futurum of the copula with verbs in 連体形 lets use talk about presumptive events. The presumptive covers sentences like "I am sure he'll have understood it" or "The cat will have eaten it by tomorrow", and in Japanese consist of a sentence describing the event ending on the verb 連体形, followed by the copula in dubitative, to indicate a feeling of "probably".

	plain presumptive using だ	*plain presumptive using です*
買(か)う	買う + だろう	買う + でしょう
歩(ある)く	歩く + だろう	歩く + でしょう
泳(およ)ぐ	泳ぐ + だろう	泳ぐ + でしょう

話(はな)す	話す + だろう	話す + でしょう
待(ま)つ	待つ + だろう	待つ + でしょう
済(す)む	済む + だろう	済む + でしょう
遊(あそ)ぶ	遊ぶ + だろう	遊ぶ + でしょう
死(し)ぬ	死ぬ + だろう	死ぬ + でしょう
分(わ)かる	分かる + だろう	分かる + でしょう
見(み)る	見る + だろう	見る + でしょう
寝(ね)る	寝る + だろう	寝る + でしょう
伸(の)びる	伸びる + だろう	伸びる + でしょう
食(た)べる	食べる + だろう	食べる + でしょう
する	する+ だろう	する+ でしょう
来(く)る	来る + だろう	来る + でしょう

Examples of this are:

彼(かれ)が分(わ)かってくれるだろう。
He'll probably understand.
(lit: "he will give understanding, probably")

この古(ふる)い車(くるま)は走(はし)るでしょう。
This old car will probably run.

There are two intonations that can be used with this construction, one where the final だろう/でしょう is pronounced with a higher pitch on the おう sound than the rest of the word, and one where だろう/でしょう is pronounced as a whole in a lower pitch. Intonated in the first manner, the sentence is a questioning presumptive, close to a normal question save for the missing question mark particle か. Intonated in the second manner, the sentence is more of an informative presumptive, translating to "I am sure that [...]", even though the speaker technically cannot truly be sure.

2.2.4.3.3. Negative pseudo-futurum

We've already seen the normal pseudo-futurum and negative pseudo-futurum for 一段 verbs in the 未然形 section, but the negative pseudo-futurum for 五段 verbs uses the 連体形 instead, pairing it with the classical helper verb まい like 一段 verbs, but using a different base. Since the polite form of a verb using ます is still a 連体形 (because ます itself is a 連体形), we list the polite form here too:

	plain negative pseudo-futurum	*polite negative pseudo-futurum using ます*
買う	買う + まい	買い + ます + まい
歩く	歩く + まい	歩き+ ます + まい
泳ぐ	泳ぐ + まい	泳ぎ+ ます + まい
話す	話す + まい	話し+ ます + まい
待つ	待つ + まい	待ち+ ます + まい
済む	済む + まい	済み+ ます + まい
遊ぶ	遊ぶ + まい	遊び+ ます + まい
死ぬ	死ぬ + まい	死に+ ます + まい
分かる	分かる + まい	分かり+ ます + まい
する	する+ まい	し+ ます + まい
来る	くる + まい	き+ ます + まい

2.2.5. Izenkei - 已然形(いぜんけい)

The 已然形, or classical imperfective, is a form that in modern Japanese is used for only one thing: the construction of the hypothetical situation (if...). This form is colloquially more commonly known as the 仮定形(かていけい), as in modern Japanese it is only used for 仮定, "assumptions".

2.2.5.1. Hypothetical

The hypothetical is created by using the particle ば, which turns a verb into a hypothetical conditional:

> 聞(き)く means to ask, 聞けば means "should one ask"
> 見(み)る means to see, 見れば means "should one see"

Used in sentences this creates the hypothetical situation that in English is done using "should ..., then ...":

> ハイデガーを読(よ)めば分(わ)かります。
> Should [you] read Heidegger, [you] will understand.

> お金(かね)があれば、おいしい食(た)べ物(もの)が買(か)えます。
> Should [you] have money, [you] can buy delicious food.

Usually these sentences are translated with "if" or "when" instead, which is not a wrong translation provided you remember that the true meaning of the 已然形 + ば is not really "if" or "when", but is really only a hypothetical conditional "supposing that ..." - "If" implies a more general truth (compare "If it rains, we

get wet" to "assuming that it rains, we get wet". The first states a truth under all circumstances, the second gives a possible truth for only one instance), and "when" carries the implication that something will definitely happen, being only a matter of time before it does. 已然形 + ば implies neither of these two things.

2.2.6. Meireikei - 命令形 (めいれいけい)

This leaves the 命令形 as final base before we are done treating the basic verb grammar. The 命令形 is, luckily, also the simplest form there is. For 五段 verbs, the grammatical 命令形 base is the same as the normal commanding form:

五段 verb	*commanding form*
買う	買え
歩く	歩け
泳ぐ	泳げ
話す	話せ
待つ	待て
済む	済め
遊ぶ	遊べ
死ぬ	死ね
分かる	分かれ

For 一段 verbs, there are two possible commanding forms that can be constructed using the 命令形 base, one using ろ, which is the true commanding form, and one using よ, which is a commanding form that doesn't really exist in English and is best described as an advisory command, similar to "see page 240 for more information", where the command isn't actually to go to page 240 right now, but only if we wish for what the rest of the sentence promises to happen.

一段 verb	*commanding form*	*advising commanding form*
見る	見 + ろ	見 + よ
寝る	寝 + ろ	寝 + よ
伸びる	伸び + ろ	伸び + よ
食べる	食べ + ろ	食べ + よ

Not unexpectedly, the irregular verbs have their own 命令形:

irregular verb	*commanding form*	*advising commanding form*
する	しろ	せよ
来る	こい	こよ

3. Verbal adjective conjugation

There are two things to notice in regards to verbal adjectives that makes them very different from verbs. The first is that some conjugations for which verbs use the 連用形, requiring the stem for adjectives instead. The second is that a lot of conjugations for verbal adjectives rely heavily on the verb ある (to be, for inanimate things). The following section will outline how various inflections, conjugations and constructions are made using verbal adjectives. Some of these are the same as for verbs, but some aren't.

3.1. Adjectival stem - 語幹(ごかん)

Unlike verbs, verbal adjectives also have several constructions that make use of the word stem, or 語幹 (ごかん) rather than an inflectional base. For verbal adjective this is the part that's left when the い at the end of the adjective is dropped:

adjective	*stem*
高(たか)い, high	高
細(こま)かい, small	細か
楽(たの)しい, enjoyable	楽し

3.1.1. Word conjunction

3.1.1.1. Adjective / adjective

This lets us turn two separate adjectives into a single adjective that encompasses the aspects of both. For instance, something that is thin, 細(ほそ)い, as well as long, 長(なが)い, can also be described as being 細長(ほそなが)い. Had we used the 連用形 like we would for verbs, this would have read 細く長い, which isn't grammatical Japanese.

Other examples of this construction are:

- 青白(あおじろ)い meaning pale (blueish white), from 青(あお)い meaning blue and 白(しろ)い meaning white.
- 甘辛(あまから)い meaning bittersweet from 甘(あま)い meaning sweet and 辛(から)い meaning spicy.
- 悪賢(わるがしこ)い meaning cunning from 悪(わる)い meaning bad and 賢(かしこ)い meaning clever.
- 堅苦(かたくる)しい meaning formal/strict from 堅(かた)い meaning hard/strict and 苦(くる)しい meaning hard to bear.

You may have noticed some of the readings on the second kanji have been voiced. As mentioned in the outline on Japanese, there are no set rules for when this will, or should, happen.

3.1.1.2. Adjective / noun

This conjunction creates a noun that carries a description of itself in the word. Examples of this are:

長靴(ながぐつ) meaning boots, from 長(なが)い meaning long and 靴(くつ) meaning shoes.
安物(やすもの) meaning cheap/crummy goods, from 安(やす)い meaning cheap, and 物(もの) meaning thing.

This combination is subtly different from the normal adjective + noun combination; if we look at the adjective/noun compound and the adjective + noun combination for 黒(くろ)), meaning black, and ペン, meaning pen, we see the following:

黒ペン means a black pen, in the sense that it's a pen that writes in black.
黒いペン means a black pen. However, it doesn't have to write in black, it's just the pen itself that's black.

3.1.2. Impression - そう

Another thing for which verbal adjectives use the stem instead of the 連用形 is the -そう impression:

adjective	*stem*
高い	高 + そう
細かい	細か + そう
楽しい	楽し + そう

There are two exceptions to this construction, being the adjectives 無(な)い, used for negation, and いい/良(よ)い, meaning 'good'. Instead of being appended with そう, their stem is appended with さそう instead:

無(な)い → なさそう
良(い・よ)い → よさそう

Because these are two frequently used adjectives, it's important to remember these exceptions. Whenever you wish to use the adjective 良(い)い, meaning good, in any inflection, the pronunciation よ is used for the kanji part of the adjective instead of the pronunciation い. So, something that is いい will seem よさそう.

3.1.3. Noun forms

Aside from being able to turn adjectives into nouns using the 連用形 like verbs (explained in the 連用形 section), there are also three special noun forms that can be created from verbal adjectives by adding any of three particles to the adjectival stem.

3.1.3.1. Quantifying nouns - さ

Quantifying nouns are such measurable things as "depth", "length", and in Japanese also things such as "cold-th" and "hot-th", which don't exist in English:

adjective	*meaning*	*quantifying noun*	*meaning*
ふか 深い	deep	深さ	depth
なが 長い	long	長さ	length
はや 速い	fast, quick	速さ	speed
さむ 寒い	cold	寒さ	cold-th

These quantifying nouns are called quantifying because they stand for some measurable quantity, unlike the nouns formed with the next particle.

3.1.3.2. Qualifying nouns - み

Qualifying nouns are nouns that describe a quality of an abstract, such as the depth of a painting, the loneliness of a story, etc.

adjective	*meaning*	*qualifying noun*	*meaning*
ふか 深い	deep	深み	depth
かな 悲しい	sad	悲しみ	sadness

3.1.3.3. Subjective nouns - 気(げ)

There is one final way to turn verbal adjectives into nuanced nouns, and that's by turning them into a subject noun as "the feeling of ...", using 気 pronounced げ:

adjective	*meaning*	*subjective noun*	*meaning*
わか 若い	young	若気	the feeling / impression of youth, vitality
あぶ 危ない	dangerous	危な気	the feeling / impression of danger
さむ 寒い	cold	寒気	the feeling / impression of cold

3.2. Mizenkei - 未然形 (みぜんけい)

The verbal adjective 未然形 is only used to create the plain negative form of adjectives, using the helper adjective of negation ない:

adjective	*plain negation*
高い	高く + ない
細かい	細く + ない
楽しい	楽しく + ない

It is technically possible to use -ずに with adjectives, in which case the stem is used instead of the 未然形, but this is very rare, and hardly falls under basic Japanese. You should remember that it is possible, but you really shouldn't try to use it until you've become fluent in Japanese.

As a note, the polite negation for verbal adjectives uses the 連用形 instead. While this would seem arbitrary given that the 未然形 and 連用形 are written the same, the difference is one of grammatical consistency.

3.3. Renyoukei - 連用形 (れんようけい)

The 連用形 is used for quite a few constructions that verbs use the 連用形 for too. However, some forms rely on the verb ある to contract into the adjectives, as we will see in for instance polite negative and past tense.

3.3.1. Polite negative

The polite negative of verbal adjectives technically uses three helper verbs: ある, ます and ぬ. The polite negative of a verbal adjective is a truly funky construction placing the adjective in 連用形 + ある in 連用形 + ます in 未然形 + ぬ in 連体形:

adjective	*polite negative*
高い	高く+あり+ませ+ん
細かい	細かく+あり+ませ+ん
楽しい	楽しく+あり+ませ+ん
ない	なく+あり+ませ+ん
よい/いい	よく+あり+ませ+ん

Technically this is an example of verbal adjectives becoming an adverb to ある, and then conjugating ある to reflect inflection. For instance:

そのパンはそれほど高(たか)くありません。
The bread is not that expensive.

This sentence could literally be considered to read "That bread is not so [being expensive]."

3.3.2. Past tense - た

The verbal adjectival past tense also uses ある, but this time ある contracts into the adjective, where the く from the adjective and the ・ from the plain past tense of ある, あった, to form かった instead:

adjective		*past tense*	*polite past tense*
高い	高[く+あ → か]った	高かった	高かった + です
細かい	細か[く+あ → か]った	細かかった	細かかった + です
楽しい	楽し[く+あ → か]った	楽しかった	楽しかった + です
ない	な[く+あ → か]った	なかった	なかった + です
よい/いい	よ[く+あ → か]った	よかった	よかった + です

There's something very important to notice here. If we look at the following sentence, we see that the adjective is in past tense, and is followed by です in present tense:

本当(ほんとう)に安(やす)かったですね。
It was really cheap, wasn't it?

The translation is past tense, because even if the copula is present tense, the adjective is in past tense. This is something that doesn't exist in many western languages and will confuse a lot of people learning Japanese at first. It's one of the things that people keep doing wrong for quite a while unless corrected at every mistake. Remember that the polite past tense is the adjective in past tense + the copula verb in present tense. Never, ever, do the following:

> 高(たか)いでした, meaning "I want to say that it was expensive, but I am someone who is making mistakes at Japanese and people will look at me as if I'm someone deserving pity for my failings. If I'm lucky they'll tell me I made a mistake, but they're Japanese so they probably won't..."

Getting back to conjugations, the really polite past negative is even funkier than the polite past negative you saw just a bit up. Again ある is used, but this time it is placed in polite past tense, rather than relying on です:

adjective	*very polite past tense*
高い	高く＋あり＋ませ＋ん＋でし＋た
細かい	細かく＋あり＋ませ＋ん＋でし＋た
楽しい	楽しく＋あり＋ませ＋ん＋でし＋た
ない	なく＋あり＋ませ＋ん＋でし＋た
よい/いい	よく＋あり＋ませ＋ん＋でし＋た

This is technically the adjective in 連用形 + ある in 連用形 + ます in 未然形 + ぬ in 連体形 + です in 連用形 + た in 連体形. Again we see some more proof of the fact that the longer something is to write, the more polite it is.

3.3.3. て form chaining

3.3.3.1. Adjective chaining

The て form for verbal adjectives is used to chain multiple adjectives together, when you want to say something like "This is a big, red, heavy book". Unlike the て form for verbs, the く from the adjectival 連用形 does not contract with て to form いて:

adjective	て *form*
高い	高く＋て
細かい	細かく＋て
楽しい	楽しく＋て
ない	なく＋て
よい/いい	よく＋て

This lets us write the previous "book" sentence in the following manner, using the adjectives 大(おお)きい, big, 赤(あか)い, red and 重(おも)い, heavy.:

> これは大きくて赤くて重い本です。
> This is a big, red, heavy book.

Just like with verbs, the actual inflection of the adjectives in て is determined by the final adjective. For instance:

> 大きくて赤くて重かった箱(はこ)です。
> It was a big, red, heavy box.

The negative form of て chaining uses the plain negative form of adjectives, with ない put into て form:

大きくなくて赤くなて重い本です。
It's a not big, not red, heavy book.

3.3.3.2. Negative imperative

Verbal adjectives can also be used for a negative imperative, where it must be noted that 'imperative' here doesn't mean command but should be thought of as meaning 'very important', such as "It is imperative that we find the culprit". Just like for verbs, this form is created by adding は to the -て form:

形(かたち)はどうでもいいけど、高(たか)くてはいけない。
[I] do not care about the shape, but it cannot be[too] expensive.

3.3.3.3. Special て form

There is one adjective that is special in its て form, and that's ない, the helper adjective of negation. The normal て form for this adjective is, like for all others, 連用形 + て, but there's a special て form for ない which is used for negative requests and is constructed using the 連体形 + で. The reason it's located in the 連用形 section is because it's a special exception, and as such has no real place in the 連体形 section. This conjugation is important when using ない in verbal conjugations:

行(い)かない。
[I] won't go.

行かないで。
(Please) don't go.

The "please" is implied, and this form is very much like begging someone to not do something. The more polite way, using an explicit 'please' uses this "て" form + 下(くだ)さる:

行かないで下(くだ)さい。
Please don't go.

While still technically a form of begging someone to not do something, this is considered the polite negative counterpart to the normal special verb て form て+ ください.

This form can also be used for regular て chaining:

食(た)べないで学校(がっこう)へ行った。
[I] went to school without eating.

which is the same as the phrase:

食べなくて学校へ行った。
[I] went to school without eating.

3.3.4. Forming nouns

Just like verbs, verbal adjectives can be turned into nouns simply by placing them in 連用形. This is the simplest way to turn adjectives into nouns, and is less complex (and of course less nuanced) than the noun forms that can be made with the stem + -さ, -み or -気:

遠(とお)く meaning "distance" comes from 遠い meaning 'distant'.
近(ちか)く meaning "vicinity" comes from 近い meaning 'close by'.

3.3.5. Forming adverbs

An important role that adjectives play has to do with acting adverbially. For instance, the adjective "fast" acts as adverb in "fast moving car", and the adjective quick acts as adverb in "to quickly finish up". In Japanese this is done by placing the verbal adjective in its 連用形 and pairing it with a verb:

楽(たの)しい means 'enjoyable' as adjective, 楽しく means 'enjoyably':

楽しい本(ほん)です。
It's an enjoyable book.

楽しく読(よ)みます。
[I] enjoyably read it.

This last sentence may not make too much sense in English, until we remember that an adverb specifies a way in which a verb action is performed. 楽しく読む means that the reading is performed in a way that is enjoyable, leading to a more natural translation "I enjoy reading it" (This seeing an adjectival adverb in Japanese where verbs are used in western languages is one of the intrinstic differences between the two, and is one of those things that can trip up students trying to translate sentences to Japanese).

速く走って、勝つんだ。
Run fast and win.

This sentence uses 速い, meaning fast, as adverb for 走る meaning to run, in て form.

3.3.6. Classical adverbs

When adjectives get turned into adverbs to be used with classical verbs such as ござる, the classical verb for ある, and 出でる, the classical verb for くる, the く in the 連用形 base is replaced with an う sound and contracts to a long vowel sound with whatever syllable precedes it. This leads to the following changes:

・ If the syllable preceding く is an あ row syllable, the adverb gets an おう sound instead:

早い becomes はや[く→う], which contracts to 早う. As you can see, the phonetic change is in the kanji here.
有難い becomes ありがた[く→う], which contracts to有難う.

・ If the syllable preceding く is an い row syllable, the adverb gets an う-glide instead:

大きい becomes 大き[く→う], which contracts to 大きゅう
美味しい becomes 美味し[く→う], which contacts to 美味しゅう

・ If the syllable preceding く is an う row syllable, the adverb gets a long う:

安い becomes 安[く→う], which does not contract and thus stays 安う

・ If the syllable preceding く is an お row syllable, the adverb gets a long お by virtue of the お-row syllable + う long お sound:

面白い becomes 面白[く→う], which does not contract and thus stays 面白う

There is no modifying rule for verbal adjectives with an え-row syllable preceding the final い, because these don't exist (which is another reason why the adjective きれい, the much loved adjective to show not every adjective ending on い is a verbal adjective, cannot actually be a verbal adjective).

3.3.7. Meireikei - 命令形 (めいれいけい)

Verbal adjectives technically don't have their own 命令形. Instead, a 連用形 contraction with ある in 命令形, あれ, is used to create a commanding form with the adjective's attributes:

adjective	*commanding form*	*commanding form*
高い	高 [く + あ → か] れ	高かれ
細かい	細か [く + あ → か] れ	細かかれ
楽しい	楽し [く + あ → か] れ	楽しかれ
ない	な [く + あ → か] れ	なかれ
よい/いい	よ [く + あ → か] れ	よかれ

This form isn't used a great deal, because one rarely commands something to have a particular attribute. The typical way to use issue a command instead is to use the adverbial form of the adjective paired with the verb なる, to become, in commanding form:

adjective	*adverbial commanding form*
高い	高く + なれ
細かい	細かく + なれ
楽しい	楽しく + なれ
ない	なく + なれ
よい/いい	よく + なれ

3.4. Rentaikei - 連体形 (れんたいけい)

The verbal adjective 連体形 has as fairly obvious role to act as modifier predicate. However, there's something quite special about this form in that it acts both as normal predicate, as well as comparative predicate. Which of these is used usually depends on context.

3.4.1. The modifier

The modifier form of an adjective is just the normal form that you find adjectives listed under in a dictionary, and is used to "modify" nouns by more narrowly defining the thing they stand for. For instance, a "green apple" is a more narrowly defined object than an "apple", and a "green, blocky apple" is an even more narrowly defined object than just a "green apple."

安(やす)いお魚(さかな)
cheap fish

安いうまいお魚
cheap tasty fish

This second sentence uses multiple adjectives in 連体形 in a pattern similar to て chaining - this is a more colloquial form of chaining adjectives, so if you want to be polite, using the て form is preferred:

安くてうまいお魚

3.4.2. The comparative

There is no distinction between an adjective's normal and comparative version. Where in English one can usually make a comparative by adding "-er" as suffix to the adjective, in Japanese one must look at context to tell whether the adjective is used as its normal form or as comparative. While Japanese does have the word もっと that can be used to force a comparative, this word means "even more ...", which means that the adjective's normal meaning needs to have already been established before it can be used. An example of correct use of もっと is illustrated in the following conversation:

A: あのう、安(やす)い傘(かさ)を探(さ)しているんですけど……
B: 安い傘ですね。これがいかがでしょうか。
A: ああ、いい傘ですね。けれど、もっと安いのありましょうか。
B: どうもすみませんが、これより安いのはありません。

A: I am looking for a cheap umbrella.
B: A cheap umbrella you said? What about this one?
A: Ah, that's a nice umbrella. But I was wondering whether you had an even cheaper one.
B: Ah, I am sorry but we do not have any umbrellas cheaper than this.

In this conversation, only after it has been established that the item in question is cheap, is もっと used to ask for an even more "cheap" item. An example of incorrect use would be:

A": この傘はちょっと高(たか)いですね。もっと安いのがありますか。

If we were to translate this sentence, it would say "This umbrella is a bit expensive. Do you have an even cheaper one?" This is clearly incorrect use of language, as we can only ask for an even cheaper item if the present one is already cheap.

3.4.3. The superlative

The superlative, in English the "most ..." version of an adjective, is formed in Japanese by prefixing the word 一番(いちばん) to the adjective, which literally means "first", in the context of a ranking.

> 一番速(はや)い 車(くるま) はその McLaren です。
> The fastest car [here] is that McLaren.

Remember that this is an adjective construction and that 一番 requires an adjective to turn into a superlative. Many people starting with Japanese mistakenly use 一番 without an adjective to say things like 一番先生(せんせい) or 一番車, which would literally mean "most teacher" and "most car". These sentences are not grammatical in either Japanese or English, since they lack a modifier to explain exactly what these nouns are the most of. Usually when this mistake is made, all that is missing is the adjective いい, meaning good: 一番いい creates the superlative "best".

3.5. Izenkei - 已然形(いぜんけい)

The verbal adjective 已然形 is used for the conditional, which just like verbs uses the particle ば:

adjective	*hypothetical conditional*
高い	高けれ + ば
細かい	細かけれ + ば
楽しい	楽しけれ + ば
ない	なけれ + ば
よい/いい	よけれ + ば

This creates a construction that is translatable as "should it be ... , ...", though again (see the verb section) the typical translation in natural English is "if ... , ...":

> 高(たか)ければ買(か)いません。
> If it's expensive, I won't buy it.

> 速(はや)ければいいんです。
> If it's fast, it's good.

4. Formality

An important part of Japanese is being able to use the right level of formality in the right situation. Using formal speech in an informal setting makes you sound strange, and using informal speech in a formal setting makes you sound rude. Japanese formality comes in two flavours. Firstly, there's the plain/polite form of speech called 丁寧語(ていねいご), which is principally determined by the absence or use of です/ます. Secondly, there's the use of humble and honorific forms of speech, called 謙譲語(けんじょうご) and 尊敬語(そんけいご) respectively, when dealing with vast social status differences between the speaker and listener or speaker and subject. These two 'flavours' are independent of each other, in that one can be plain humble or humble polite, as well as plain honorific and honorific polite, should one want to explore the full range of options.

How and when to talk plain or polite, and when to be humble or when to be honorific, depends very much on the concept of in and out group, as well as familiarity. In ones familiar in group, one can talk in a plain and informal manner, while talking to someone who is part of ones formal in group, or part of an out group, typically warrants polite speech. When one talks to someone in ones out group that is of clearly higher social status and you wish to acknowledge this fact, humble and honorific speech is typically used as well as polite form.

4.1. Polite speech

The two main words that determine politeness are the copula です and the helper verb of politeness ます. These two verbs will turn any sentence that is in plain informal form into something that is neutral polite, and suits most situations.

4.1.1. です

While the copula です is part of 丁寧語, it also has an informal counterpart, だ. This informal version of the copula is a rather tricky verb, and changes a lot depending on when it's used. While the conjugation scheme for です is reasonably regular, the conjugation scheme for だ is not, and there are many instances where だ changes to な or の, or even disappears when a plain form of speech is used.

Before we look at だ more closely, let us look at the conjugation schemes for です, and note a few things that are worth our notice:

	affirmative	*negative*
present	だ	じゃない
		ではない
	です	じゃありません
		ではありません
past	だった	じゃなかった
		ではなかった
	でした	じゃありませんでした
		ではありませんでした

We see two things that are noteworthy here. Firstly, we see that each negative has a では/じゃ pair. This is because colloquially では can be shortened to じゃ. For the negations of だ/です, however, this colloquial contracting is the de facto standard, and using じゃありません is considered formal polite, rather than colloquial. Using では instead of じゃ is considered being more formal. Most of the time you will want to use the formal polite versions of the copula, which is basically always safe, polite, language.

Secondly, we see that there are two possible negatives, one using ない and one using ありません. This hints at the presence of ある somewhere, which can be found in the more classical copula combination である (which explains the modern plain past tense だった). This classical form is considered curt in modern Japanese, so it is best avoided.

4.1.2. だ instability

As mentioned, だ is a relatively unstable verb. It tends to change pronunciation or even disappear depending on which construction it's used in. There aren't any real rules that exist for this change (except for one), so the easiest thing is to just show what happens in which cases. Also, if we look at the bases for だ, we see some pretty funky stuff:

未然形	だろ
連用形	だっ (で)
連体形	な
終止形	だ
已然形	なら

One of the funky things is that the 終止形 is actually listed - this is because だ is one of the few words for which the roles of the 終止形 and the 連体形 are still preserved in modern Japanese, with the 終止形 being used as sentence ending form, and the 連体形 being used as predicative form. This is a good indicator that だ is not a normal "plain form" of です, but actually a different classical verb, and with this in mind we continue to look at how it behaves under certain circumstances when used in larger sentences.

- noun phrases: 本(ほん)だ。 ("It's a book.")

Using this sentence as our basic clause for other sentences, we first notice that だ is in its sentence ending form だ and that all is well.

- noun adjectives: きれいだ。 ("It's pretty.")

Again when we use だ instead of です and all is well.

- quoting statement: 本だと思(おも)います。 ("I think it's a book.")

The quoting statement quotes the phrase "本だ" (the first phrase in this list). This construction doesn't change the way だ is used, so we're still safe.

- reasoning: 本だから、... 。 ("Because it is a book, ...")

Here too, we see that だ is left alone and we can use our initial noun phrase directly in our larger sentence.

- implicit reason: 本なんです。 ("It's [because it is] a book.")

Here something odd has happened: だ has changed into な. Whenever だ precedes a particle の or ん, it changes its reading to な instead.

- reasoning: 本なので、... 。 ("Due to it being a book, ...")

Same story, same change.

- descriptive: 本のようです。 ("Like a book.")

Here we see that だ has changed into の. Why it does this is not really known, but it just does. While we're really saying "本だ" combined with "ようです", the way よう works means we have to change だ into の. While this might seem like the genetive pair 本のよう, if we use it for a person, then we still see の: なお君(くん)だ, "It's Nao", + ようです becomes なお君のようです.

- possibility: 本かもしれない。 ("It might be a book.")

This and the following two cases are even more drastic. Instead of changing だ, it is omitted entirely (and has to be, putting it in would be wrong). While we want to say "本だ" (it is a book) + "かもしれない" (might be), we need to drop the だ before we're allowed to do this.

- similarity: 本みたい。 ("It looks to be a book.")

Just like with かもしれない, we must drop the だ if we want to say something looks like something else using みたい.

- verbal adjectives: 大(おお)きい。 ("It's big.")

Finally, for verbal adjectives the plain form simply doesn't use だ. Saying for instance 大きいだ would be wrong.

As you have seen, there are a few loops to だ that you have to remember when you use it, but hopefully with enough practice this will become second nature and you will simply pick the right version of the copula when forming your sentences.

4.1.3. ます

Like です, ます is a principally formal polite verb, but it's not as fickle as です is. The only things worth noting are that ます relies on です to form its negative past tense, and that the negative is formed only with ん; there is no ない past tense.

	affirmative	*negative*
present	ます	ません
past	ました	ませんでした

There's much less to tell about ます than there is about です, so having looked at its conjugations again, it is best to move on.

4.1.4. ござる

There is one more verb that facilitates politeness, and that's the verb ござる. This verb is the polite counterpart to ある, and has a special set of bases:

未然形	ござら
連用形	ござい
連体形	ござる
已然形	ござれ
命令形	ござい

This explains why the ございます you always hear really comes from ござる, and why it shouldn't be ござります as you would expect if ござる were a normal 五段 verb (which it would be in classical Japanese). There are four more verbs that share this irregularity, namely いらっしゃる, おっしゃる, なさる and 下(くだ)さる, the first three of which we shall see in the honorifics section, and the last of which will come back in the section on giving and receiving.

4.2. Social differences

As mentioned, while polite speech is principally formed using です/ます form, speech tuned for the social difference between the speaker and the listener is done using humble and honorific speech. These are different from です/ます in that they can in part be formed using conjugations, but may also involve choosing different verbs that mean the exact same as their non-honorific/humble counterparts.

4.2.1. Humble verb form

When one addresses someone that is socially much higher than oneself, it is customary to lower one's own status by using humble speech. One way to make verbs humble, is to prefix it with the honorific particle 御 (usually お, except for a few [音読み noun] + する verbs, for which it is pronounced ご instead), place the verb in its 連用形 form, and append either する or the even more humble いたす (致す). This doesn't change the meaning of the verb in any way, but only makes it humble - a concept that quite often trips up people learning humble/honorific form. If we examine the various possible normal and humble forms, we see a

sentence that in all instances means the exact same, but is perceived as having different politeness levels:

> 断(ことわ)る。
> [I] refuse. (informal)
>
> 断ります。
> [I] refuse. (formal polite)
>
> 断りします。
> [I] refuse. (using noun form + する, more formal than formal polite)
>
> お断りする。
> I refuse. (plain humble. As this is humble form, the only person this can apply to is first person)
>
> お断りします。
> I refuse. (humble polite. As this is humble form, the only person this can apply to is first person)
>
> お断り致(いた)す。
> I refuse. (plain, but more humble than when using する. As this is humble form, the only person this can apply to is first person)
>
> お断り致します。
> I refuse. (polite and more humble than when using する. As this is humble form, the only person this can apply to is first person)

All these seven forms say the exact same thing, except the perceived level of politeness/humility is different.

Not all verbs can be turned into humble form like this, though. For some verbs, it doesn't make sense to use a humble form, such as the verb 怖(こわ)がる meaning "to fear", or the compound verb 扱使(こきつか)う which means "to work someone hard", for which a humble form is obviously out of place. Other verbs, such as 見(み)る meaning "to see" or 食(たべ)る meaning "to eat" have special humble verbs instead of a conjugated humble form.

4.2.2. Humble verbs

The following table is a list of verbs and their humble counterparts:

verb	*meaning*	*humble counterpart*
来る	come	参る
行く	go	参る
いる	be / exist (for animate objects)	おる
言う	say / be called	申す
する	do	致す
知る	know	存じる
見る	see	拝見する
食べる	eat	いただく
飲む	drink	いただく
貰う	receive	いただく
聞く	ask	伺う
聞く	listen	承る
上る	give	差し上げる
会う	meet	お目に掛かる
見せる	show	ご覧に入れる

Also a very short list of 音読み+する verbs that get ご instead of お in the humbling pattern:

注意する	pay attention to	ご注意する/致す
注文する	order [something]	ご注文する/致す

4.2.3. Honorific verb form

Just as one humbles oneself when facing someone of much higher social status, it is also customary to use honorific speech when referring to this person's actions or state. Similar to how verbs can be made humble by using the 御+連用形+する/致す, pattern, nearly all verbs can be made honorific by using the same pattern but with に+なる/なさる instead of する/致す:

断る。
[He] refuses. (informal)

断ります。
[He] refuses. (formal polite)

断りします。
[He] refuses. (using noun form + する, more formal than formal polite)

お断りになる。
[He] refuses. (plain honorific. As this is honorific form, this can no longer apply to first person)

お断りになります。
[He] refuses. (polite honorific)

お断りなさる。
[He] refuses. (plain, but more honorific than when using に+なる)

お断りなさっています。
[He] refuses. (polite and more honorific than when using に+なる)

Again, just like with the humble form, there are verbs that are not put in this particular pattern, but instead are replaced with special honorific verbs. Notice that the last phrase uses a present progressive instead of plain present. While using なさいます is grammatically possible, using なさっています sounds more natural.

4.2.4. Honorific verbs

The following table is a list of verbs and their honorific counterparts:

verb	*meaning*	*honorific counterpart*
来(く)る	come	いらっしゃる
		お出(い)でになる
		お出でなさる
行(い)く	go	いらっしゃる
		お出(い)でになる
		お出でなさる
いる	be / exist (for animate objects)	いらっしゃる
		お出でなさる
言(い)う	say / be called	おっしゃる
する	do	なさる
知(し)る	know	ご存知(ぞんじ)る
		ご存知でいらっしゃる

見(み)る	see	ご覧(らん)になる
		ご覧なさる
食(たべ)る	eat	召(め)し上(あ)がる, in this context 召し refers to summons
飲(の)む	drink	召し上がる
寝(ね)る	sleep	お休(やす)みになる
		お休みなさる
思(おも)う	think	思(おぼ)し召(め)す
		(normal honorific pattern also possible)
着(き)る	wear (on the body)	お召しになる, in this context 召し refers to clothing

And the very short list of 音読み+する verbs that get ご instead of お in the humbling pattern:

注意(ちゅうい)する	pay attention to	ご注意になる/なさる
注文(ちゅうもん) する	order [something]	ご注文になる/なさる

5. Nouns and noun adjectives

With all this verbal talk going on you would almost forget that Japanese also has nominals - nouns and noun adjectives. Since these words are not verbal, they have to rely on the copula です/だ for inflections. Before we look at these forms though, we need to look at the differences between pure nouns and noun adjectives in Japanese, as there is a subtle difference.

5.1. Genitive vs. attributive

As mentioned in the outline, nouns and noun adjectives differ in the way they "chain up" so to speak. While nouns can only be placed in a genitive relation, expressing things like "Bob's mother's teacup", noun adjectives work like adjectives rather than nouns when chained. However, in dictionary form, you cannot tell what is a noun and what is a noun adjective; this difference is only visible when we start chaining them:

彼(かれ)の 車(くるま)
His car.

Here we have chained two nouns, 彼 (he) and 車 (car), to form the genitive chain "his car".

彼の 妹(いもうと) の車
His little sister's car.

Again we chain only nouns, to form the genitive chain "his sister's car". Now, if we use noun adjectives, we see an adjectival な instead of a genitive の:

危険(きけん)な事(こと)もある。
[there] are also dangers [lit: dangerous things].

The words 危険 and こと on themselves are nouns, but when we try to create a noun chain with 危険, it acts adjectival, not nominal. That is, instead of a の to indicate a genitive relation, we see a な that indicates an adjectival relation.

To make matters more confusing, as mentioned in the section on だ, the plain copula can become な when followed by の, such as for instance in the grammatical pattern [... の事...] or [...の/んです]. This means that both nouns and noun adjectives in sentences like "本だ" ("it is a book", using a noun + だ) or "きれいだ" ("it is pretty", using noun adjective + だ), get な instead, again offering no way to tell if something is a noun or noun adjective other than to simply remember which word was of which word class.

5.2. Inflections using です

Conjugating these words is essentially infecting です, and adding this to the noun or noun adjective:

	formality	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	informal	[nominal] + だ	[nominal] + じゃない
			[nominal] + ではない
	formal	[nominal] + です	[nominal] + じゃありません
			[nominal] + ではありません
past	informal	[nominal] + だった	[nominal] + じゃなかった
			[nominal] + ではなかった
	formal	[nominal] + でした	[nominal] + じゃありませんでした
			[nominal] + ではありませんでした

For more conjugations for nominals, which are just the inflections of だ/です, see the conjugation scheme in the following section.

5.3. Noun conditional

There is one 'inflection' that needs to be mentioned separately because while it technically relies on だ, this is not apparent from its form, namely the noun conditional. In English this is the conditional in statements like "should it be a [noun], then ..." or "if it's a [noun], then ...". In Japanese these statements are made with the 已然形 of だ, なら:

> いい本(ほん)なら買(か)います。
> If it's a good book, [I] will buy it.

One can either use なら, or add the hypothetical particle ば as is normally done for verbs. The choice of using なら or ならば is reasonably arbitrary, and the rule "the longer it is, the more formal it sounds" applies here:

> 先生(せんせい)ならきっと分(わ)かりますよ。
> The teacher will surely understand.
>
> 先生ならばきっと分かりますよ。
> The teacher will surely understand.

These two sentences mean the exact same thing, but the second sentence sounds slightly more formal because of the use of ならば rather than なら. Again, one should remember that while using "if" in a translation typically suits the translated sentence, the real connotation of なら(ば) is "Should it be ...", since this is an 已然形 + ば construction for the plain copulate だ (another bit of mystery for だ, why is its 已然形 なら? Just how much can this helper verb change?)

6. Conjugation schemes

6.1. Regular verbs: 五段 (ごだん) verbs

Contractions in the inflections are indicated with [c]

6.1.1. Bases

未然形	final う-row syllable is replaced with the corresponding あ-row syllable
連用形	final う-row syllable is replaced with the corresponding い-row syllable
連体形	dictionary form ending on the う-row syllable
已然形	final う-row syllable is replaced with the corresponding え-row syllable
命令形	final う-row syllable is replaced with the corresponding え-row syllable

6.1.2. Inflections

inflection	*formality*	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	informal		未然形 + ん
		連体形	未然形 + ない
	formal	連用形 + ます	連用形 + ません
past	informal	連用形 + た [c]	未然形 + なかった
	formal	連用形 + ました	連用形 + ませんでした
て form	informal	連用形 + て [c]	未然形 + ないで
			未然形 + なくて
	formal	連用形 + まして	連用形 + ませんで
past conditional	informal	連用形 + たら [c]	未然形 + なかったら
	formal	連用形 + ましたら	連用形 + ません でしたら
representative	informal	連用形 + たり [c]	未然形 + なかったり
	formal	連用形 + ましたり	連用形 + ません でしたり
pseudo-futurum	informal	未然形 + う [c]	連体形 + まい
		連体形 + だろう	未然形 + ないだろう
	formal	連用形 + ましょう	連用形 + ますまい
		連体形 + でしょう	未然形 + ないでしょう
past pseudo-futurum	informal	連用形 + たろう [c]	未然形 + なかったろう
		連用形 + ただろう [c]	未然形 + なかった だろう
	formal	連用形 + ましたろう	連用形 + ません でしたろう
		連用形 + たでしょう [c]	未然形 + なかった でしょう

hypothetical	neutral	已然形 + ば	未然形 + なければ
	neutral emphatic	連体形 + なら	未然形 + ないなら
	formal (1)	連用形 + ませば	連用形 + ませんなら
	formal (2)	連用形 + ますれば	
commanding	informal	命令形	連体形 + な
		連用形 + な	未然形 + ないで
		連用形 + なさい	(連用形 + なさるな)
		お + 連用形 + なさい	お + 連用形 + なさらないで
	very formal	お + 連用形 + なさいませ	お + 連用形 + なさいますな
requesting	neutral	連用形 + て下(くだ)さい [c]	未然形 + ないで下さい
	formal	お + 連用形 + なさって下さい	お + 連用形 + なさらないで下さい
passive, honorific, potential	informal	未然形 + れる	未然形 + れない
	formal	未然形 + れます	未然形 + れません
short potential	informal	連用形 + 得(え)る [c]	連用形 + えない [c]
	formal	連用形 + えます [c]	連用形 + えません [c]
causative	informal	未然形 + せる	未然形 + せない
	formal	未然形 + せます	未然形 + せません
causative passive	informal	未然形 + せられる	未然形 + せられない
	formal	未然形 + せられます	未然形 + せられません
humble	I	お + 連用形 + する	お + 連用形 + しない
		お + 連用形 + します	お + 連用形 + しません
	II	お + 連用形 + 致(いた)す	お + 連用形 + 致さない
		お + 連用形 + 致します	お + 連用形 + 致しません
honorific	I	お + 連用形 + に + なる	お + 連用形 + に+ならない
		お + 連用形 + に + なります	お + 連用形 + に+なりません
	II	お + 連用形 + なさる	お + 連用形 + なさらない
		お + 連用形 + なさいます	お + 連用形 + なさいません

6.2. Regular verbs: 一段 (いちだん) verbs

6.2.1. Bases

未然形	remove final る
連用形	remove final る
連体形	dictionary form ending on る
已然形	replace final る with れ
命令形	remove final る

6.2.2. Inflections

inflection	*formality*	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	informal		(未然形 + ぬ)
		連体形	未然形 + ない
	formal	連用形 + ます	連用形 + ません
past	informal	連用形 + た	未然形 + なかった
	formal	連用形 + ました	連用形 + ませんでした
て form	informal	連用形 + て	未然形 + ないで
			未然形 + なくて
	formal	連用形 + まして	連用形 + ませんで
past conditional	informal	連用形 + たら	未然形 + なかったら
	formal	連用形 + ましたら	連用形 + ませんでしたら
representative	informal	連用形 + たり	未然形 + なかったり
	formal	連用形 + ましたり	連用形 + ませんでしたり
pseudo-futurum	informal	未然形 + よう	未然形 + まい
		連体形 + だろう	未然形 + ないだろう
	formal	連用形 + ましょう	連用形 + ますまい
		連体形 + でしょう	未然形 + ないでしょう
past pseudo-futurum	informal	連用形 + たろう	未然形 + なかったろう
		連用形 + ただろう	未然形 + なかっただろう
	formal	連用形 + ましたろう	連用形 + ません でしたろう
		連用形 + たでしょう	未然形 + なかった でしょう
hypothetical	neutral	已然形 + ば	未然形 + なければ
	neutral emphatic	連体形 + なら	未然形 + ないなら
	very formal	連用形 + ませば	連用形 + ませんなら

		連用形 + ますれば	
commanding	informal	命令形 + よ	
		命令形 + ろ	連体形 + な
		連用形 + な	未然形 + ないで
		連用形 + なさい	(連用形 + なさるな)
	formal	お + 連用形 + なさい	お + 連用形 + なさらないで
	very formal	お + 連用形 + なさいませ	お + 連用形 + なさいますな
requesting	neutral	連用形 + て下(くだ)さい	未然形 + ないで下さい
	formal	お + 連用形 + なさって下さい	お + 連用形 + なさらないで下さい
passive, honorific, potential	informal	未然形 + られる	未然形 + られない
	formal	未然形 + られます	未然形 + られません
causative	informal	未然形 + させる	未然形 + させない
	formal	未然形 + させます	未然形 + させません
causative passive	informal	未然形 + させられる	未然形 + させられない
	formal	未然形 + させられます	未然形 + させられません
humble	I	お + 連用形 + する	お + 連用形 + しない
		お + 連用形 + します	お + 連用形 + しません
	II	お + 連用形 + 致(いた)す	お + 連用形 + 致さない
		お + 連用形 + 致します	お + 連用形 + 致しません
honorific	I	お + 連用形 + に + なる	お + 連用形 + に+ならない
		お + 連用形 + に + なります	お + 連用形 + に+なりません
	II	お + 連用形 + なさる	お + 連用形 + なさらない
		お + 連用形 + なさいます	お + 連用形 + なさいません

6.3. Irregular verbs: する (ずる/じる)

This conjugation scheme requires a bit of an explanation, because it concerns all three verbs for the most part, but there are a few key differences. First off, the standard 未然形 for する and ずる are し and じ respectively. However, for the classical negative, and passive and causative constructions, other versions are used:

For the classical negation:

- する uses the せ-未然形
- ずる uses the ぜ-未然形

For the passive and causative:

- する uses both the せ- and さ-未然形, for せられる/される for the passive and させる for the causative
- ずる uses just the ぜ-未然形, forming ぜられる for the passive and ぜさせる for the causative.
- じる uses its only 未然形, forming じられる for the passive and じさせる for the causative.

6.3.1. Bases

base	する	ずる	じる
未然形	し, せ, (さ)	じ, ぜ	じ
連用形	し	じ	じ
連体形	する	ずる	じる
已然形	すれ	ずれ	じれ
命令形	せ, し, せい	ぜ, ぜい	じ

6.3.2. Inflections

inflection	*formality*	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	informal		せ-未然形 + ん
		連体形	未然形 + ない
	formal	連用形 + ます	連用形 + ません
past	informal	連用形 + た	未然形 + なかった
	formal	連用形 + ました	連用形 + ませんでした
て form	informal	連用形 + て	未然形 + ないで
			未然形 + なくて
	formal	連用形 + まして	連用形 + ませんで

past conditional	informal	連用形 + たら	未然形 + なかったら
	formal	連用形 + ましたら	連用形 + ませんでしたら
representative	informal	連用形 + たり	未然形 + なかったり
	formal	連用形 + ましたり	連用形 + ませんでしたり
pseudo-futurum	informal	未然形 + よう	連体形 + まい
		連体形 + だろう	未然形 + ないだろう
	formal	連用形 + ましょう	連用形 + ますまい
		連体形 + でしょう	未然形 + ないでしょう
past pseudo-futurum	informal	連用形 + たろう	未然形 + なかったろう
		連用形 + ただろう	未然形 + なかっただろう
	formal	連用形 + ましたろう	連用形 + ませんでしたろう
		連用形 + たでしょう	未然形 + なかったでしょう
hypothetical	neutral	已然形 + ば	未然形 + なければ
	emphatic	連体形 + なら	未然形 + ないなら
	formal (1)	連用形 + ませば	連用形 + ませんなら
	formal (2)	連用形 + ますれば	
commanding	informal	せ-命令形 + よ	
		し-命令形 + ろ	連体形 + な
		連用形 + な	未然形 + ないで
	formal	なさい	なさらないで
			(なさるな)
	formal (2)	なさいませ	なさいますな
requesting	neutral	連用形 + て下(ください)	未然形 + ないで下さい
	formal	なさって下さい	なさらないで下さい
passive, honorific	informal	see note above	～れない
	formal	～れます	～れません
causative	informal	see note above	～せない
	formal	～せます	～せません
causative passive	informal	see note above	～せられない
	formal	～せられます	～せられません

humble	致(いた)す
honorific	なさる

potential	出来(でき)る

6.4. Irregular verbs: くる (来る)

6.4.1. Bases

base	kanji form	pronunciation
未然形	来	こ
連用形	来	き
連体形	来る	くる
已然形	来れ	くれ
命令形	来い	こい

6.4.2. Inflections

inflection	*formality*	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	informal		未然形 + ん (ぬ)
		連体形	未然形 + ない
	formal	連用形 + ます	連用形 + ません
past	informal	連用形 + た	未然形 + なかった
	formal	連用形 + ました	連用形 + ませんでした
て form	informal	連用形 + て	未然形 + ないで
			未然形 + なくて
	formal	連用形 + まして	連用形 + ませんで
past conditional	informal	連用形 + たら	未然形 + なかったら
	formal	連用形 + ましたら	連用形 + ませんでしたら
representative	informal	連用形 + たり	未然形 + なかったり
	formal	連用形 + ましたり	連用形 + ませんでしたり
pseudo-futurum	informal	未然形 + よう	未然形 + まい
		連体形 + だろう	未然形 + ないだろう
	formal	連用形 + ましょう	連用形 + ますまい
		連体形 + でしょう	未然形 + ないでしょう
past pseudo-futurum	informal	連用形 + たろう	未然形 + なかったろう
		連用形 + ただろう	未然形 + なかっただろう
	formal	連用形 + ましたろう	連用形 + ませんでしたろう
		連用形 + たでしょう	未然形 + なかったでしょう
hypothetical	neutral	已然形 + ば	未然形 + なければ
	emphatic	連体形 + なら	未然形 + ないなら
	formal (1)	連用形 + ませば	連用形 + ませんなら
	formal (2)	連用形 + ますれば	
commanding	informal	命令形	連体形 + な

		連用形 + な	未然形 + ないで
		連用形 + なさい	(連用形 + なさるな)
	formal	お + 出(い)で + なさい	
	very formal	お + 出で + なさいませ	お + 出で + なさいますな
requesting		連用形 + て下(くだ)さい	未然形 + ないで下さい
passive, honorific, potential	informal	未然形 + られる	未然形 + られない
	formal	未然形 + られます	未然形 + られません
causative	informal	未然形 + させる	未然形 + させない
	formal	未然形 + させます	未然形 + させません
causative passive	informal	未然形 + させられる	未然形 + させられない
	formal	未然形 + させられます	未然形 + させられません

humble	参(まい)る
honorific	いらっしゃる

6.5. Special verbs: ある

Contractions in the inflections are indicated with [c]

6.5.1. Bases

未然形	あら
連用形	あり
連体形	ある
已然形	あれ
命令形	あれ

6.5.2. Inflections

inflection	*formality*	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	informal	連体形	ない
	formal	連用形 + ます	連用形 + ません
past	informal	連用形 + た	なかった
	formal	連用形 + ました	連用形 + ませんでした
て form	informal	連用形 + て [c]	なくて
	formal	連用形 + まして	連用形 + ませんで
past conditional	informal	連用形 + たら [c]	なかったら
	formal	連用形 + ましたら	連用形 + ませんでしたら
representative	informal	連用形 + たり [c]	なかったり
	formal	連用形 + ましたり	連用形 + ませんでしたり
pseudo-futurum	informal	未然形 + う [c]	連体形 + まい
		連体形 + だろう	なかろう
			ないだろう
	formal	連用形 + ましょう	連用形 + ますまい
		連体形 + でしょう	ないでしょう
past pseudo-futurum	informal	連用形 + たろう [c]	なかったろう
		連用形 + ただろう [c]	なかっただろう
	formal	連用形 + ましたろう	連用形 + ませんでしたろう
		連用形 + たでしょう	なかったでしょう
hypothetical	neutral	已然形 + ば	なければ
	neutral emphatic	連体形 + なら	ないなら
	formal (1)	連用形 + ませば	連用形 + ませんなら

	formal (2)	連用形 + ますれば	
short potential	informal	ありえる	ありえない
	formal	ありえます	ありえません
commanding	informal	命令形	
passive, honorific, potential	informal	未然形 + れる	未然形 + れない
	formal	未然形 + れます	未然形 + れません
short potential	informal	連用形 + 得(え)る	連用形 + えない
	formal	連用形 + えます	連用形 + えません
potential	informal	ありえる	ありえない
causative	informal	未然形 + せる	未然形 + せない
	formal	未然形 + せます	未然形 + せません
causative passive	informal	未然形 + せられる	未然形 + せられない
	formal	未然形 + せられます	未然形 + せられません

polite	ござる

6.6. Special verbs: だ/です

6.6.1. Bases for だ

未然形	だろ
連用形	だっ (で)
連体形	な
終止形	だ
已然形	なら

6.6.2. Bases for です

未然形	でしよ
連用形	でし
連体形	です

6.6.3. Inflections

inflection	*formality*	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	informal	だ	じゃない
			ではない
	formal	です	じゃありません
			ではありません
past	informal	だった	じゃなかった
			ではなかった
	formal	でした	じゃありませんでした
			ではありませんでした
て form	informal	だって	じゃなくて
			ではなくて
	formal	でして	じゃありませんでして
			ではありませんでして
past conditional	informal	だったら	じゃなかったら
			ではなかったら
	formal	でしたら	じゃありませんなら
			ではありませんなら
representative	informal	だったり	じゃなかったり
			ではなかったり
	formal	でしたり	じゃありませんでしたり
			ではありませんでしたり

pseudo-futurum	informal	だろう	じゃなかろう
			ではなかろう
			じゃないだろう
			ではないだろう
	formal	でしょう	じゃありませんでしょう
			ではありませんでしょう
past pseudo-futurum	informal	だったろう	じゃなかったろう
			ではなかったろう
	formal	でしょう	じゃありませんでしょい
			ではありませんでしょう
hypothetical		なら	じゃなければ
		ならば	ではなければ

6.7. Special verbs: ます

6.7.1. Bases

未然形	ませ (ましよ)
連用形	まし
連体形	ます
已然形	ますれ
命令形	ませ (まし)

6.7.2. Inflections

inflection	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	連体形	未然形 + ん
past	連用形 + た	未然形 + んでした
て form	連用形 + て	未然形 + んで
past conditional	連用形 + たら	未然形 + んでしたら
representative	連用形 + たり	未然形 + んでしたり
pseudo-futurum	ましょう	未然形 + んでしょう
past pseudo-futurum	連用形 + たろう	未然形 + んでしたろう
hypothetical	未然形 + ば	未然形 + んなら
	已然形 + ば	
commanding	命令形	

6.8. Special verbs: The five special base verbs

These verbs have been included because they all share the same type of special bases.

6.8.1. Bases for 御座(ござ)る

未然形	ござら
連用形	ござい
連体形	ござる
已然形	ござれ
命令形	ござい

6.8.2. Bases for いらっしゃる

未然形	いらっしゃら
連用形	いらっしゃい
連体形	いらっしゃる
已然形	いらっしゃれ
命令形	いらっしゃい

6.8.3. Bases for おっしゃる

未然形	おっしゃら
連用形	おっしゃい
連体形	おっしゃる
已然形	おっしゃれ
命令形	おっしゃい

6.8.4. Bases for 下(くだ)さる

未然形	下さら
連用形	下さい
連体形	下さる
已然形	下され
命令形	下さい

6.8.5. Bases for なさる

未然形	なさら
連用形	なさい
連体形	なさる
已然形	なされ
命令形	なさい

6.9. Verbal adjective conjugation scheme

Contractions in the inflections are indicated with [c]

6.9.1. Bases

語幹(ごかん)	Remove the い from the dictionary form.
未然形	語幹 + く
連用形	語幹 + く
連体形	語幹 + い
已然形	語幹 + けれ
(命令形	語幹 + かれ)

6.9.2. Inflections

inflection	*formality*	*affirmative*	*negative*
present	informal	連体形	未然形 + ない
	formal	連体形 + です	連用形 + ありません
past	informal	連用形 + あった [c]	未然形 + なかった
	formal		連用形 + ありませんでした
て form	informal	連用形 + て	未然形 + ないて
	formal		未然形 + なくで
past conditional	informal	連用形 + あったら [c]	未然形 + なかったら
	formal		連用形 + ありませんでしたら
pseudo-futurum	informal	未然形 + あろう [c]	未然形 + なかろう
			未然形 + ないだろう
	formal	連体形 + でしょう	未然形 + ないでしょう
			連用形 + ありませんでしょう
past pseudo-futurum	informal	連用形 + あったろう [c]	未然形 + なかったろう
			未然形 + なかっただろう
	formal	連用形 + あった でしょう [c]	未然形 + なかったでしょう
			未然形 + ありません でしたろう
hypothetical	neutral	已然形 + ば	未然形 + なければ
	neutral emphatic	連体形 + なら	未然形 + ないなら
commanding	informal	連用形 + あれ [c]	

6.9.3. Classical adverb form

The following table shows the rules for using verbal adjectives as adverbs to classical verbs such as ござる and 出(い)でる.

adjective written as ...	*becomes ...*
語幹 ending in an あ-row syllable + い	語幹 ending in an お-row syllable + う
語幹 ending in an い-row syllable + い	語幹 ending in an い-row syllable, with a ゆ glide
語幹 ending in an う-row syllable + い	the same 語幹 + う
語幹 ending in an お-row syllable + い	the same 語幹 + う

7. Particles and modifiers

7.1. Particles

Japanese uses particles, 助詞(じょし) or more affectionately called てにをは (after the verb て form and the three quintessential particles に, を and は) to give grammatical meaning to words or phrases that precede them. Some of these particles correspond to western prepositions and postpositions, but others fulfil roles that are implied by particular grammatical constructions in western languages, and simply have no direct translation. Then there are particles which don't just have one translation, but translate to many different things in western language, due to the fact that Japanese divides the perception of processes and states in the universe up in a drastically different way from western languages.

There are various types of particles that can be distinguished without imposing too much western grammar on an intrinsically non-western system: firstly there are the grammatical particles. These are particles that cannot be translated because they fulfil grammatical roles, rather than semantic roles. Examples of these are for instance the subject and topic marker, which explicitly denote grammar, rather than has some translatable meaning. Aside from these grammatical particles, there is the set of particles that fill the role of prepositions in western languages. However, because of the way Japanese works, multiple western prepositions may map to only one particle, and multiple particles may seem to map to one preposition. There are also various particles for emphatic marking, and particles that nominalise phrases in some way so that they can be used as sub phrases in larger, more complex sentences. Unlike the other particles these nominalisers can also act as normal nouns, and as such have normal translations, but their function as nominalising particle makes them special.

Perhaps surprisingly then, the particles list I will offer you isn't really split up in the aforementioned categories. Instead, I'll list a set of 72 particles split up in terms of how important it is you know these particles. Some particles are more than essential to know in order to understand even the most basic Japanese like "Where is the toilet?" or "Hi, my name is ...". Some particles are less essential, like those that allow you to say "although" instead of "even though". Then there are the particles that aren't really essential to know, like the various ways to place informal emphasis on a sentence, or how to pose yourself a rhetoric question.

7.2. The particles lists

7.2.1. Quintessential particles

It is reasonably safe to say that you cannot use Japanese to any real extent without knowing the following ten particles. Of course you will be able to shoot

off a few sentences, but you won't be able to hold anything that comes even close to a consistent short and simple conversation. This makes the following ten particles quintessential: you must know at least the first meaning of each of these particles. You must know them well.

7.2.1.1. が - subject, weak but, classical genitive

The particle が can fulfil three roles in Japanese. Principally, this particle denotes the subject of an operative word (regardless of whether the operative is actually explicitly used in the sentence). Simple sentences that illustrate this use are:

誰(だれ)が来(き)ましたか。
Who came [here]?

お茶(ちゃ)が好(す)きです。
[I] like tea.

In these sentences が links the subjects, respectively [who] and [tea], to their operatives [come] and [like]. As mentioned in the outline, whenever something not-yet-talked-about is being mentioned in a conversation, が is used. Also, when asking questions in relation to something unknown, が is used (because this too is something new).

A second use of が is as a weak "but":

すみませんが、今(いま)何時(なんじ)ですか。
Excuse me but, what time is?

そうかも知(し)れないが、自分(じぶん)の所為(せい)じゃないか。
That may be true but, isn't it your own fault?

In these sentences, が is not used to set up a contrast, but acts more like a gentle in-sentence conjugation particle, gluing the two pieces together with only a moderate level of contrast at best.

A final role of が is a very rare one, and is that of classical genitive particle. In modern Japanese the genitive is denoted by の, but there are still a few (really a few) words left for which が is used instead, most of them dealing with the emperor. Also, in extremely formal writing, one may find が still used instead of の.

7.2.1.2. は - topic, contrast, negative imperative

Before we look at the role this particle plays, it should be emphasised that the particle は is always pronounced わ.

This particle also has three roles in Japanese. The first of these is to act as topic marker for conversations or texts. The main difference between a topic and a subject is that you can leave off a topic from a sentence, and it will still make perfect sense. This in contrast to a subject, which if removed creates a sentence with a gap in it:

> 今日(きょう)は誰(だれ)が来(き)ましたか。
> Who came [here] today?

The same sentence on its own without the topic works just fine:

> 誰が来ましたか。
> Who came [here]?

However, the same sentence on its own without the subject is unintelligible:

> 今日は来ましたか。
> came [here] today?

The key words in the preceding bit are "on its own". It is entirely possible that this last sentence is used in a conversation where the topic is already someone who comes by on a regular basis, in which setting this sentence would make perfect sense. However, because in this setting it wouldn't be a subject but a topic, it could still be omitted while resulting in a working sentence.

A second, more subtle use of は is as contrast marker. In this use, it can either be used in an "[A]は something, [B]は something else" pattern, or on it own in an "[A]は something" pattern without being a previously established context. This is an at times confusing use, because for those not yet familiar with Japanese the second use is not really difference from the normal topic marking. To illustrate, an example:

> 違(ちが)いますよ。これは青(あお)くて、それは藍色(あいいろ)です。
> [That's] not [quite] right [though]. This is (Japanese) blue, and that's indigo blue.
>
> (青い has been called "Japanese blue" here, because 青い indicates any colour in the colour range green-blue)

Here a contrast is given between "this" and "that", regardless of whether they were already topics.

The more confusing version is for instance the following:

A: 泳ぐのが好きです。
B: 私も。いい運動ですね。
A: あっ、いいえ、私は別に運動するために泳ぎません。

A: I like swimming.
B: Me too. It's good exercise isn't it.
A: Ah, no, I don't particularly do it for the exercise.

In line three, 私 seems to be a normal topic. After all, we can omit it and be left with 別に運動するために泳ぎません, which is a perfectly fine sentence. However, the subtlety here is that in this small conversation, speaker A is not a topic, but suddenly mentions herself using は. This implies that she's contrasting her own case to some other case that's not mentioned. In this case, it's more than likely she's contrasting herself to speaker B.

A third role that は can play was already mentioned in the verb and verbal adjective sections, when it follows a て form. In this use, it creates a negative imperative (where again, imperative should be read to mean the same as in "It is imperative that this gets fixed"), usually being followed by 駄目, no good, or いけない (won't do).

今日来なくてはいけません。
[You] have to drop by today.
(lit: [you] cannot not-come today)

It should be noted once more that this isn't truly a command, but more an illustration of the particulars of a situation.

7.2.1.3. も - similarity, contrastive

As can be seen from the example conversation for the contrastive function of a single は, the particle も can be used to indicate 'too' or 'also'. This particle replaces が or は, when used:

A: 私が本が好きです。
B: 私も本が好きです。

A: I like books
B: I also like books

This is a reasonably simple use of も, which can also be used in a double pattern such as in the following sentence:

A: 本が好きですか、音楽(おんがく)が好きですか。
B: 本も音楽も好きです。

A: Do [you] like books, or do [you] like music?
B: [I] like both books and music.

Remember thought that because も marks a similarity to something previously mentioned, you cannot use も out of the blue. It requires a prompt either by someone else, or by something you yourself just said.

A second use of も is after the て form of verbs and verbal adjectives. In this use, も acts as an emphatic contrasting particle, meaning something like the English "even [by/if] ...".

今行(いまい)っても間(ま)に合(あ)わないでしょう。
Even [by] leaving now, [you] probably won't make it.

There are two special things that concern this particle. One, a special case of this use of も is in combination with the copula です, which becomes でも. This 'combined particle' will be treated in the next section on essential particles. Two, this particle can be used with question pronouns to do a rather nifty thing:

- 何(なに) means "what", 何も means "anything" or "nothing", when followed by a positive or negative verb respectively.
- どこ means "where", どこも means "anywhere" or "nowhere", when followed by a positive or negative verb respectively.
- 誰(だれ) means "who", 誰も means "anyone" or "no one", when followed by a positive or negative verb respectively.

This trend continues for words like どんな (what kind of?), どっち (which way?), いつ (when?), どうして (why?) and so forth and so forth. The phrase "when followed by a positive or negative verb respectively" may need some explanation: only the western translation becomes a positive or negative word. In Japanese, the word doesn't magically mean two different things depending on what verb form follows it. To illustrate this:

何もします。
[I] will do anything.

何もしません。
[I] won't do anything = [I] will do nothing

Likewise:

どこもある。
[It] exists anywhere.

どこもない。
[It] doesn't exist anywhere = [it] exists nowhere.

So in these translations only the English carries "two" meanings, while in Japanese it's just the same word, with an obvious meaning because a negative verb simply implies a negative. It should be noted that when used this way, many particles come between the question word and も:

If we want to add に to どこも, we get どこにも
If we want to add で to 何も, we get 何でも (pronounced なんでも).
If we want to use を with 誰も, we get 誰をも.

The same goes for nearly any other purely grammatical particle (particles that aren't words on their own too) that might conceivably be used.

7.2.1.4. の - genitive, nominalising, soft emphatic

の has three principle roles in Japanese. The first and probably most important role is that の is the genitive particle. This means that we can use it to genitively chain nouns together, as mentioned in the outline:

母(はは)のアンパンがうちの犬(いぬ)に食(た)べられちゃった。
Mom's sweet bun was eaten by the dog.

Here 母 (mother) and アンパン (sweet bun) are genitively combined so that the noun アンパン "belongs" to the noun 母. Similarly, うち (our house) and 犬 (dog) are genitively combined so that the noun 犬 "belongs" to the noun うち.

This is the most basic function of の, and can be used to chain as many things as you might want to genitively chain. However, sometimes the way の acts might be a bit confusing:

私(わたし)の犬
My dog

This is understandable use of の.

愛(あい)の歌(うた)
Love song

Here it is not apparent that "love's song" and "love song" are the same thing. Sometimes の links words in Japanese that in for instance English do not contain an explicit genitive. Love song is one such example, but you will probably encounter more as you study the language.

A second use of の is to nominalise clauses. This is a very powerful 'feature', because it lets us talk about phrases as if they were nouns. It lets us say things like "I didn't like walking around town today", where "walking around town today" is technically treated as nominalised clause, and thus acts as noun.

> 今日(きょう)の町(まち)を歩(ある)くのがそんなに楽(たの)しくありませんでした。
> [I] didn't particularly like today's walk about the city.

In this sentence, the clause 町を歩く, "to walk the city", has been turned into a gerundive (a gerund is the noun form of a verb: "to walk" → "the walking") by の: 町を歩くの meaning "walking the city" as noun. With this noun form we can then make all sorts of comments in relation to it.

However, this nominalisation is restricted to events that are in-topic. If some activity or event is a context to a conversation, then の can be used to nominalise it, but if it's something that is not a context yet, then の alone is not enough. Instead, の + 事(こと) or just 事 is required in these cases, as these can be used to refer to things by their concept, rather than by actual instances that have happened:

> 歩くの事がそんなに好きじゃありません。
> [I] don't particularly like walking.

The difference between のこと and こと is characterised by whether you want to refer to some particular event, or the general case, as illustrated in the next two sentences:

> 手紙(てがみ)を出(だ)すの事は忘(わす)れました。
> [I] forgot to mail [the] letters.
>
> 手紙を出す事は忘れました。
> [I] forgot [how] to mail letters.

The difference is the first sentence refers to a particular instance of "mailing letters", while the second refers to the collective activity of just "mailing letters" in general. Forgetting the first means the letters will arrive a day late, forgetting the second means the letters will never even arrive. A big difference.

A final use of の is as a softener. For questions, this use is considered quite effeminate, and men tend to use のか instead (so it is wise to stick to this practice yourself):

どうしたの？
どうしたのか？
What happened?

This is a less direct way of asking どうした？

For answers to questions that ask for a reason to some situation, の softens this reason:

A: どうしてまだ会社(かいしゃ)にいますか？
B: まだ仕事(しごと)が終(お)わっちゃいないの。

A: Why are you still at work?
B: [it is because] I'm not done with my work yet.

Again, this use is considered effeminate, so men tend to use this construction in conjunction with the plain copula, with or without contracting the の to an ん to form のだ/んだ: the polite version の + です is also a formal polite way to say the same as just using の does, but this combination "particle" will be treated in the essential particles section.

7.2.1.5. で - instrument, location of an event

The role of で is technically two-fold, although some people consider the て form of です, which is also written で, a particle, in which case there would be three roles.

The first role is that of instrumentalis. In English this is things like "by", "with" or "using" in relation to some instrument, in sentences like "This was written with a red pen" or "We came to the US by airplane". In Japanese the role these words play is done with で:

赤(あか)ペンで書(か)いてある。
It's written with a red pen.

飛行機(ひこうき)でアメリカに来(き)ました。
[We] came to America by airplane.

A second important role that で plays is that it signifies the location of a verb action or event. For instance, in English the sentences "We played in the park" and "The knives are in the cupboard" use the same preposition "in". In Japanese these are two very difference things: the first sentence focuses on an event, while the second focuses on a location. Consequentially, the first sentence requires で, while the second sentence uses another particle, に, which will be treated in the next section:

公園(こうえん)で遊(あそ)びました。
[We] played in the park.

This use of で is quite nice when one says something that in English would be ambiguous such as "We stayed at a hotel." In English, it is not possible to readily tell whether this would be similar in meaning to an answer to "where did you stay?" or "what did you do?" without more information. In Japanese this distinction is immediately obvious:

ホテルで泊(と)まった。
[We] "stayed at a hotel".

ホテルに泊まった。
[We] stayed at "a hotel".

7.2.1.6. に - point/frame in time/space indicator, purpose, indirect object

This particle is a very versatile particle, because of the way the Japanese interpret processes and states in and of the universe. The most principle function of this particle is to describe points or frames in time space. This sounds complicated, so running through examples for all the combinations might help clarify things:

三時(さんじ)に出(で)ます。
[I] will head out at 3.

This example indicates a point in time, namely the specific moment 3 o' clock. In contrast to this, a time frame rather than a point in time can also be indicated with に:

週(しゅう)に二回(にかい)運動(うんどう)します。
[I] exercise twice a week.

Here instead of an exact moment, a time frame is specified in which something happens. However, に is not restricted to just time:

猫(ねこ)がソファに寝(ね)ている。
The cat's napping on the couch.

Here に is used to indicate a point in space, namely a spot on the couch (if we wanted to focus on the act of napping, で would have had to be used instead). Like for time, に can also indicate an indeterminate location:

海(うみ)の向(む)こうに別(べつ)の世界(せかい)がある。
There's a different world on the other side of the ocean.

The "other side" of the ocean isn't really one location, it's very much indeterminate. However, it is a location, and that's why we can use に for it.

A second role that に plays is to indicate a purpose of some action. When used in this fashion it typically follows a verb in 連用形:

米(こめ)を買(か)いに行(い)ってきます。
[I]'m going out to buy rice [and come back].

Here the "going" is done for the purpose of 買う, "buying".

映画(えいが)を見(み)に行かない？
Won't [you] go watch a movie [with me]?

Here the "going" is done for the purpose of 見る, "seeing".

The more general "purpose" pattern is to use (の)ため + に, which explicitly stands for purpose, and can be used with a wider variety of verbs and statements, as explained in the nominaliser section on 為(ため).

The last role that に plays is that of marking a verb's indirect object which, while called 'object', often indicates a person rather than a thing. Nearly every transitive verb can be performed for someone, or with someone, or can be done to someone, etc. All these relations to things that aren't the direct verb object are relations to indirect verb objects:

彼女(かのじょ)に花(はな)を買(か)ってあげました。
[I] bought flowers for [my] girlfriend.

ボールを犬(いぬ)に投(な)げた。
[I] threw the ball at the dog.

7.2.1.7. へ - direction

Before we look at the role this particle plays, it should be emphasised that the particle へ is always pronounced え.

Sometimes confusion arises about when to use に and when to use へ when it comes to directions and locations. The answer is surprisingly simple: when you want to indicate a direction, use へ. When you want to indicate a location, use に.

The real problem isn't which to use, but when it doesn't matter which you use. For instance, take the following two sentences:

東京(とうきょう)に行(い)きます。
[I] will go to Tokyo.

東京へ行きます。
[I] will go to Tokyo.

While in English the sentence "I will go to Tokyo" can both mean that Tokyo is the destination, or that Tokyo is just the most identifiable point in indicating a direction of travel, in Japanese there is a subtle difference:

東京に行きます。
[I] will go to Tokyo. This is my destination [for it is marked as a location].

東京へ行きます。
[I] will go in the direction of Tokyo [this is not necessarily my destination, for it is not marked as a location].

Sometimes it doesn't matter in a conversation whether you say something is a destination or just a general direction of travel, and even Japanese will use them interchangeably under those circumstances, but there are also examples in which it's impossible to use one instead of the other. For instance, if you want to say where you've been during your vacation, you can only use に, because you're talking about locations you've visited, not directions you travelled in. Similarly, when you're navigating your way through a forest and want to go west, there's no specific or even general location you want to go to, you only want to head in a particular direction, so you can only use へ to describe this.

In questions it's typically customary to answer with the particle that was used in the question. Thus, if someone asks you a question with に, you answer with に, and if you get a question with へ, you answer with へ, of course observing that you're using the right words to match the particle.

7.2.1.8. を - direct object

Before we look at the role this particle plays, it should be emphasised that the particle を is always pronounced お.

Transitive verbs, those verbs that operate on something, get their direct object marked with the particle を in Japanese. This is very easily illustrated with a few examples:

何(なに)をする？
What are [you] doing?

Here "what" is the direct object of "do". One always does 'something' - it's not possible to simple "do".

リンゴを食(た)べます。
[I] eat an apple.

Here the direct object for "eat" is "apple". This example also serves as an illustration that verbs are not necessarily only transitive or only intransitive: one can eat "something", or one can just "eat".

Even more complex in terms of verb objects, the verb 'to give' in English can be performed on its own, in relation to a direct object, in relation to an indirect object, or both at the same time. The same goes for the Japanese version:

上(あ)げます。
[I] will give [it].

本(ほん)を上げます。
[I] will give the book.

霜川(しもかわ)さんに上げます。
[I] will give [it] to [Mrs.] Shimokawa.

本を霜川さんに上げます。
[I] will give the book to [Mrs.] Shimokawa.

Just remember that if something is a verb's direct object, it gets を, and if it's an indirect object, it gets に. Keep that in mind, and you should always be safe.

7.2.1.9. と - inclusive noun list, accompanying, quotation, logical implication

I consider this particle quintessential because of the variety of roles it plays. Acting as an inclusion particle, the various contexts allow for it to be interpreted as meaning anything from "and" to "with" to even a logical connective. However, the most basic role as unifier is that of inclusive noun list marker (as mentioned in the outline), where it creates a list of only the items mentioned:

牛乳(ぎゅうにゅう)とジュースを買(か)った。
[I] bought milk and juice.

This sentence also implies that nothing else was bought, which is somewhat to be expected for something called an "inclusive list" (We will look at the particle for open lists later, when we look at や).

When using this with people instead of plain objects, the interpretation of what the unification actually stands for differs depending on the context. For instance, if we look at the following two sentences we see two possible translations for と, while in Japanese it really still does the same thing:

石田(いしだ)さんと本田(ほんだ)さんのアイディアです。
[This] is mr. Ishida and mrs. Honda their idea.

石田さんと本田さんと公園(こうえん)に行(い)きました。
[I] went to the park [with] mr. Ishida and mrs. Honda.

In the first sentence, と does the same as in the initial example for inclusive listing, creating the list "Ishida and Honda" as a single entity for "idea" to belong to. In the second sentence however, uses と in a slightly different, and requires you to know that there is some missing contextual information. The full sentence, while sounding awkward because the contextual information is reasonably obvious to Japanese, would be:

私(わたし)は石田さんと本田さんと公園に行きました。
I went to the park with mr. Ishida and mrs. Honda.

Here the と is actually including the persons "Ishida" and "Honda" into the act of going to the park. If we look at the decomposition, we see that the act of "going" is performed with "Ishida" and "Honda" included. Because in English this kind of including people into acts is done using the word "with", we find it in the translation instead of the "and" that is used when the inclusion forms a list such as in the first sentence.

Of course this kind of inclusion also works for just one person:

石田さんと出会(であ)った。
[I] met Ishida [somewhere, out of the blue].

竹松(たけまつ)さんと映画(えいが)を見(み)ました。
I watched a movie with Mr. Takematsu.

Both have a person aside from the obvious contextual person included in the acts described by the sentence, marked with と.

Another important use of と is when quoting. "Quoting" should be taken liberal here - it can refer to either a literal quote, referring to something spoken by someone using the combination of と and 言(い)う, "to say/be called", or can refer to an abstract quote; a bit of text that simply refers to something.

そうすると言ったけど、まだしませんでしたね。
[You] said "[I]'ll do so", but [you] haven't done it yet, [have you]?

In this sentence we're quite obviously dealing with a normal literal quote, quoted using the verb for saying or calling.

車を買おうと思います。
[I]'m thinking about buying a car.
(lit: [I]'m thinking 'shall I buy a car')

In this sentence, an abstract quote referring to the thought "should I buy a car?" is quoted using the verb for thinking.

鉛筆は英語でなんと言いますか。
What is えんぴつ called in English?
(lit: えんぴつ is called what in English?)

Here the act of "quoting" may seem a bit confusing: the "quote" in question is just the word "what". While it seems impossible to quote the word "what" as anything meaningful, this sentence is a question, which reflects back on the quote (as should be clear in the literal translation).

One very important thing that と quoting is used for is for using onomatopoeia and mimesis:

ザーと雨が降ってきた。
The rain came pouring down.
(lit: The rain came falling down as "zaa")

Here the sound word ザー, which is used to indicate the sound of pouring rain, is quoted as being what the rain does. In animate speech this kind of quoting is quite frequent, with onomatopoeia, called 擬音語, and mimesis, called 擬態語, are used to make a conversation more lively.

The last role that と plays is as a particular form of inclusion particle known as the logical implication, where the word 'logical' is very important. The logical implication is characterised as "A → B", meaning "if A is the case, then B is the case as well" or put more concisely "A guarantees B". We see this implication in for instance "If something is a cat, it's a mammal" or "If my car breaks down, it means I can't use my car". For instance:

時間に遅れると試験は受けられません。
If [you] are late, [you] cannot take the exam.

While it may seem like these two events follow each other, the first actually guarantees the second. Another, slightly harder, example would be:

学校(がっこう)に行くと美嶋(みしま)さんに会(あ)う何(なん)て……
I didn't think I'd meet you here at school...

We see here that the English translation seems to say something drastically different from what と is used for, but it is important to keep in mind that not all translations work in favour of figuring out the original meaning. This is one of those problematic translations: if we look at what the Japanese really says using a literal translation, we see that it reads "going to school guaranteeing meeting mishima [is something I would not have thought]", where the part in brackets is expressed by 何て. If we first remember that using someone's name is the Japanese equivalent of using the pronoun "you", then we already see something more readable: "going to school guaranteeing meeting you [is something I would not have thought]". What we see now is that the speaker is expressing disbelief over the fact that he or she could have actually made the implication "going to school means meeting you" today, something that would usually be complete nonsense because they wouldn't.

Having a speaker call into question the validity of an implication with a simple phrase may sound like pretty advanced grammar, and frankly it is. The speaker for this sentence wanted to emphasise how rare it was to meet his or her acquaintance, and decided to remark on this using an expression of disbelief, rather than plainly remarking "it is rare to see you at school". However, while the grammar might be advanced, the example is one you should see while you're a beginner - don't look at the translation to figure out why the Japanese was translated the way it was, first look at the Japanese and see if a translation based on the bits of grammar you know support the given translation.

On a final note, people become confused some times about which construction to use when translating "if..." statements into Japanese, wondering whether to use the implicative と or another construction. To avoid this confusion the following should help you make your decision: if you want to translate an "if A, B" statement, then as long as what you are trying to say means that A guarantees B, you can use と. If not, then using the hypothetical 已然形 + ば or hypothetical past 連用形 + たら constructions is the way to go. So: "if it rains, we'll get wet" can be expressed using と, but "If you give them a call, they can tell you how to get there" cannot.

7.2.1.10. か - question marker, normal or, logical or

This is the last of the quintessential particles, and in its most common use probably also the easiest. This particle is used as a question mark. Take a random normal sentence, add か at the end, and it has become a question:

今行(いまい)きます。
[I]'m going now.

今行きますか。
Are [you] going now?

This particle can also be used in a "double question" pattern, in which it actually acts as a normal "or", such as in "do you want tea, or coffee?":

コーヒーにします。
[I] will have coffee

コーヒーにしますか。
Will [you] have coffee?

コーヒーにしますか、お茶(ちゃ)にしますか。
Will [you] have coffee or tea?

When following a sentence ending on a verb in its own 連体形 (so, not inflected using other verbs resulting in a 連体形), and paired with a near exclamatory intonation - where the verb is pronounced at a low pitch and か at a significantly higher pitch - か can be used to mean "as if [I] would ..." / "like [I] would ...", such as in the following example:

そんな説明(せつめい)で分(わ)かるか。
Like [I] would understand [you] with such an explanation!

When used in this exclamatory way, this is basically the only construction that can almost always be translated with an exclamation mark, as it is a very strong statement.

か can also be used to create a noun list, like と, in which case it still means "or" but acts as logical or. The logical or is a very funny construction, since it is actually completely contrary to the intuitive or, and allows you to answer with just a yes or no:

natural language: "Will you take the bus or the train" - "I will take the bus"

logical language: "Will you take the bus or the train" - "yes I will"

This logical answer means that at least one of the offered choices is the right one. To clarify, the logical version should really be read as:

"Will you take the [bus or train]?" - "Yes, I will take the [bus or train]."

This indicates that the or-list is one entity that is "true" if any of the list items is the right one or "false" if none of the list items qualify. For instance, if we want to go to Tokyo by bike, the following conversation might take place:

A: バスか電車(でんしゃ)で 東京(とうきょう) に行(い)きますか？
B: いいえ。

A: Will [you] go to Tokyo by [bus or train]
B: No.

The answer is no, because we won't be going by [bus or train], we'll be going by bike. If instead we'd be going by bus, the answer would of course be "はい", because now one of the listed items is actually a qualifying one. As a final reminder of the "normal" question pattern for or, if someone wanted to ask which of the two we would take, they would ask:

バスで行きますか、電車で行きますか。
Will [you] go by bus, or by train?

Finally, like も, か can be added to question words, to create "some instance" of what the question words asks for:

何(なに) means "what", 何か means "something"
どこ means "where", どこか means "somewhere"
誰(だれ) means "who", 誰か means "someone".

Unlike for も though, when に or で or the likes are used in combination with か in this way, they do not get placed between the question word and か, so the following is nothing out of the ordinary:

何か (something) + を = 何かを
誰か (someone) + に = 誰かに

and similarly for any other question word.

7.2.2. Essential particles

You can get by with ten particles, but in a language that has well over a hundred particles, ten is a bit little. The following eighteen particles would also be considered important, though not quite as quintessential as the first ten. Armed with these first 28 particles you should be able to at least hold a simple animate conversation.

7.2.2.1. のです - reasoning

As mentioned in the previous section for の, の + です can be used as a way to give a reason for something without explicitly stating so. This means you can give a normal statement and finish it with a form of のです, turning it into something close to a factoid, which can be interpreted by the listener(s) as a reason for a situation, or an explanation of a prior statement. For instance:

A: 眠(ねむ)そうね。
B: ああ。電車(でんしゃ)で眠ってしまったんだ。
A: そうですか。

A: You look sleepy.
B: Yeah, [it is that] I feel asleep on the train.
A: Ah, I see.

The "it is that" part in the translation for line B is the literal translation for のです, and is usually best simply left out, or if really needed translated with "as" (meaning something like "because"). While it's tempting to translate のです or its other forms んです, のだ and んだ as "because", this is not what it means. There is nothing in のです that actually translates to an explicit "because", so whenever possible do not use this word when translating.

のです can also be used to ask for a reason, paired with a question that would otherwise warrant a yes/no answer:

A: これでいいですか。
B: はい。

A: Is it okay this way?
B: Yes.

A: これでいいんですか。
B: はい、残(のこ)りは明日(あした)するんだ。

A: is it okay this way?
B: Yes, [we]'ll do the rest tomorrow.

We see here that a normal -ですか question is a simple "is?" yes/no question, but that using のですか not only asks for a yes/no answer but also the motivation for the yes/no answer (the mixed politeness form between the two lines used here may indicate a subordinate talking to their boss).

This kind of asking for an implicit reason to the yes/no answer is very useful in for instance situations like:

すみません、この辺(へん)に公衆電話(こうしゅうでんわ)があるんですか。
Excuse me, are there any public phones near here?

If you ask this question with ありますか, you may just receive a yes/no answer, but using のですか (or a form thereof), you indicate you also want to know what motivates the yes/no answer, so in case the answer is yes, you'll hear where, and if you hear no, you'll probably be told where you might find them instead.

7.2.2.2. ので - due to

This is essentially the て form for のです, and means "it is that ..." as unfinished sentence, which is in English typically translated as "due to". There is an important distinction between "due to" and "because" that deserves some special attention: "due to" can typically not be used to indicate things such as explaining volitional action (I am doing this because...), request (I would like ... because), personal opinions (I like it ... because), commands (do ... because), and invitations/suggestion (would you like to ... because). The same holds for ので: it cannot be used for any of these.

You'd almost forget there are other things beside these categories, but the most fundamental one, stating fact, is still there and is exactly what this particle is used for:

今日(きょう)は休(やす)みなので、お店(みせ)が閉(し)めてあります。
Due to it being a holiday today, the shop is closed.

故障(こしょう)しているので、他(ほか)のを使(つか)うんです。
Due to it being broken, [you] will [have to] use another one.

Because of the fact that this particle can only be used for factoids, and cannot be used to express one's own opinion, volition or suggestions, it is considered more polite than the next particle, から, which acts as a general "because". ので is used frequently in official documents and formal settings, where stating something as something other than a factoid might lay responsibility for the statement with someone.

7.2.2.3. から - origin for space, time, events or reasoning

The broadest definition that can be given for から is that it signifies the origin of anything, be it space related (starting from some point), time (starting at some time), events (starting from the moment after you undertake a particular action), or even reasoning (making an argument that is grounded in a particular perspective). Because of this, it's a very versatile particle. To see this versatility, let's look at several examples to illustrate the, in translation, different uses of this particle:

京都(きょうと)から奈良(なら)へ行(い)く。
[We]'re heading from Kyoto in the direction of Nara.

六時(ろくじ)から仕事(しごと)してるんだ。
[I] work starting at 6 o' clock.

来月(らいげつ)から大学生(だいがくせい)です。
[I]'ll be a university student as of next month.

洗濯(せんたく)をしてからゴミを捨(す)てます。
After [I] have done the laundry [I]'ll throw out the garbage.

遅(おく)れたから試験(しけん)を受(う)け取(と)られなかった。
Because [I] was late, [I] couldn't take the exam.

黒金(くろがね)さんは先生(せんせい)だから上手(じょうず)に説明(せつめい)することも出来(でき)ます。
Mr. Kurogane is a teacher, so of course he can also explain things well.

You may have noticed the difference between verb て + から and verb た + から. The first construction uses an open statement (an unfinished event if we remember what て stands for) that acts as point of origin for a new event once finished, while the second uses a closed statement as a point of origin for a reasoning. The easy way to remember this is that a て form isn't a finished verb action, so no conclusions can be drawn from it, while a 連体形 is for all intents and purposes done, and can be used for drawing conclusions and commenting on.

7.2.2.4. まで - indicator of the extent of space, time, events and concepts.

The counterpart to から is the particle まで, which signifies the extent and thus end of something, rather than the origin:

奈良(なら)まで行(い)く。
[We]'re going up to Nara.

六時(ろくじ)まで仕事(しごと)しています。
[I] work till 6 o' clock.

来月(らいげつ)まで大学生(だいがくせい)です。
[I]'ll be a university student until next month.

洗濯(せんたく)をするまでゴミを捨(す)てます。
[I]'ll be throwing out garbage until [I] start doing the laundry.

そこまで言(い)うんですか。
[How can you] say [something] (to that extent)?

This last sentence is incredibly sparse in terms of actual translation, having much more implied translation than literal, but illustrates the conceptual 'extent', where you cannot physically measure saying something, but can only conceptually say someone is saying something that is either insignificant or grave in consequence.

Of course から and まで can be used together in the typical "from ... up till ..." pattern:

京都(きょうと)から奈良(なら)まで行(い)く。
[We]'re going from Kyoto up to Nara.

六時(ろくじ)から七時(しちじ)まで運動(うんどう)します。
[I] will exercise from 6 till 7 o' clock.

1999年(ねん)から 2004 年まで大学生でした。
[I] was a student from 1999 up till 2004.

But don't let the following sentence trip you up:

友達(ともだち)が寄(よ)ってきたから、彼(かれ)が帰(かえ)るまで 宿題(しゅくだい) をしません。

This sentence does not mean "I will not do homework from the moment my friend has arrived until he leaves", but actually means:

> Because my friends has dropped by, I will not do homework until he leaves.

This sentence is not a "from ... up till ..." sentence, but a reason marked with から, where the conclusion happens to contain まで. Be careful!

7.2.2.5. までに - until

The combination of まで + に is a subtle restriction of the normal particle まで:

九時(くじ)まで集(あつ)まるんです。
[We]'ll assemble till 9 o' clock.

九時(くじ)までに集(あつ)まるんです。
[We]'ll assemble before 9 o' clock.

The difference is that まで indicates "up until" while までに indicates just "until" - the difference between including the last moment and excluding the last moment.

7.2.2.6. より - comparative, origin

Before explaining the modern use, it might make sense to explain that より used to play the role that から plays today. In fact, in legal documents より is still used instead of から. Now, this may not have been a very lengthy explanation, but it does make understanding why より does what it does in modern Japanese easier: in modern Japanese, より is used to label something with respects to something else:

アンパンは食(しょく)パンより甘(あま)いです。

Literally this line reads "Anpan, with respect to dinner bread, is sweeter." which makes the somewhat abstract explanation earlier a lot clearer. Typically, より gets translated with "rather than", but this can be confusing because in Japanese the most important things come later in the sentence, so the part before より is actually the subordinate clause, and the part following より the dominant clause, whereas in English it's the other way around. Another way that より gets translated is as the adjectival comparative, leading in this case to "Anpan is sweeter than dinner bread" but again, the English translation does not accurately reflect the true meaning of より in Japanese.

The bad news is there is no way to do a literal enough translation that has the same order of clauses in English as it has in Japanese, because the languages handle relations differently. Therefore, both translations are basically just fine, provided you are careful in considering a translation only a translation and not an indication of how the Japanese is ordered:

アンパンは食パンより甘いです。
Anpan, with respect to dinner bread, is sweeter.
Anpan is sweeter than dinner bread.

より can also be used without a dominant clause, in which case the dominant clause has to come from the context somehow:

東京(とうきょう)タワーより高(たか)い。
Higher than the Tokyo Tower.

7.2.2.7. けど - however

The translation for this particle is always an amusing one. While the English "however" comes at the start of a sentence and is followed by a comma, the Japanese けど comes mid sentence (and may also be followed by a comma). Strangely enough, they both mean the same thing, but the way they do it is just syntactically different.

> English: This is true. However, there are more things at play.
> Japanese: そうだけど、他(ほか)の要素(ようそ)もある。
>
> Notice that the Japanese phrase does not have a full stop (。) before けど.

For more fun, けど is actually the shortest form of the particle(s) け(れ)ど(も), standing for the four sentence joiners けれども, けれど, けども and けど. Again the rule "the longer, the more polite", but けれども and けども both contain the emphatic も, while けれど and けど do not, which make けれども and けども even more contrastive than けれど and けど.

Important to know for proper use is that け(れ)ど(も) follows 連体形 clauses.

7.2.2.8. しか - save/except

This particle is sometimes translated with "only", but when it is it typically needs a very strange and contrived explanation. Instead, remember that しか does not mean only, but means "save"/"except", as used in for instance "I didn't do a dang thing today, save/except eat."

> 今日(きょう)は食(た)べることしか何(なに)もしなかった。
> Today [I] did nothing except eat.

That's really all there is to it. The only additional rule is that しか follows verbs in 連体形, or nouns directly:

> 先生(せんせい)しかいない。
> [There] is no one but [the] teacher.

7.2.2.9. だけ - only/just

Unlike しか, だけ does mean "only", and is typically followed by the instrumental particle で to indicate something is done in some restricted way:

> 一人(ひとり)だけでしました。
> [I] did it just by myself.

The same idea can be expressed with しか, but then the actual phrase meaning needs to be adapted to allow for this:

私(わたし) しかしなかった。
No one did it except me.

Notice that these two phrases connote very different things, even though they share the same basic idea. Both claim that one person performed a task, but the sentence with だけ sounds far more positive than the one with しか. The second sentence sounds almost accusative, which is a direct consequence of the fact that しか means save, and thus needs to be used with a negative verb, as well as with an unnamed party in this case.

だけ can also be used with verbs in 連体形:

一言(ひとこと)言(い)うだけで分(わ)かりました。
[He] understood [it] with just one word.

However, while だけ is used to indicate a particular instance, for the repetitive versions of just/only such as in for instance "why do you always only eat caramel-brittle flavoured ice cream?" the particle ばかり (or ばっかり) is used. This particle will be treated in the less-essential particles section.

The verb 出来(でき)る, "to be able to do" (remember from the verb section that this is the potential form of する) in combination with だけ creates a special word: 出来るだけ. This word is special because it's part of a pair that expresses almost the same thing, but not quite: できるだけ and なるべく. Both express "as ... as possible" but there's a subtle difference:

出来るだけ早(はや)く来(き)て下(くだ)さい。
Please come as quickly as possible.

なるべく早く来て下さい。
Please come as quickly as possible.

The difference between the two is that 出来るだけ expresses "do whatever you can to ...", where なるべく expresses "at your earliest convenience" or even just "if possible". The first essentially works as a command, saying to drop everything and do whatever the sentence says to do, provided this is at all possible (hence the 出来る), while the second doesn't demand quite this much, due to the words that it's made up of: a combination of なる, to become, and the 連用形 of the classical, very odd, verb べし (which defies modern word classes), used to indicate a social expectation.

7.2.2.10. でも - strong emphatic (even), but

This particle is actually a combination of the て form for the copula, で, and も as contrastive emphatic marker. Together, they form a strong emphatic marker that can be translated with "even", "regardless of" or "but even then":

> 先生(せんせい)でも分(わ)かりませんよ。
> Even the teacher doesn't know.

> 新(あたら)しいのを買(か)った。でも、これもまた問題(もんだい)があります。
> I[I bought a new one. But, this one too has a problem.

Like も, this stronger version can be used in combination with question words to form extremes:

- いつ, "when" becomes いつでも meaning "always" or "never" depending on whether the verb that follows expresses positive or negative.
- どちら, "which direction" becomes どちらでも meaning "any and all directions" or "no direction at all" depending.
- どんな, "what kind" becomes どんなでも meaning "any kind" or "no kind whatsoever" depending.

It should be noted that while technically, like with も, particles come between the question word and でも, for the particles を, の and で it is more common to place them after でも rather than in between the question word and particle (especially for で this makes a lot of sense)

7.2.2.11. のに - even though

This particle should not be confused with a loose combination of の and に, such as in the following sentences:

> 石川(いしかわ)さんのに何(なに)かが書(か)いてありそうです。
> It seems like there's something written on Ishikawa's [something].

> この美味(おい)しそうなのにしましょう。
> Let['s] have that tasty looking one.

In both cases, the のに part is the loose particle の, plus the loose particle に. However, there is also the combination particle のに which works remarkably different:

まだ十歳(じっさい)なのに、ピアノが凄(すご)く上手(じょうず)です。
Even though [she]'s only 10 years old, [she]'s incredibly good at playing the piano.

Notice that だ has changed to な in this sentence: the sub sentence on its own is まだ十歳だ。This is different from the previous sentence, in which な was used because -そう is a noun adjective.

This makes のに somewhat tricky to use, and somewhat tricky to hear. For quite a while you're likely to hear every のに as a loose の+に, which means a lot of sentences don't seem to makes sense, after which you'll start hearing only のに, which means a lot more sentences will make sense, but you'll suddenly no longer be able to tell when a normal の+に is used. Only after a while more will you start to be able to distinguish both for what they really are.

7.2.2.12. や - open noun list, resignation

Just like と can be used to create inclusive noun lists, や can be used to create open noun lists:

牛乳(ぎゅうにゅう)やジュースを買(か)ってきました。
[I] went to buy, amongst other things, milk and juice.

The English translation often omits this key "amongst other things" part, because in English buying "milk and juice" when you're carrying huge shopping bags doesn't mean there's only milk and juice in the bags, while in Japanese this distinction is inherent to the particle used. However, whenever you hear や remember this "amongst other things" factor, or you'll start using や instead of と, or worse, と instead of や.

A second use of や is as a sentence ending particle, signifying a resignation to one's fate in the face of hardship:

仕方(しかた)がないや。
[I] guess there's nothing [I] can do about it..

This use of や is more popular in the southern regions of Japan, but it is used in standard Japanese as well.

7.2.2.13. ば - hypothetical conditional

As already mentioned in the verb and verbal adjective sections on the 已然形, ば creates a hypothetical conditional situation. This particle isn't quintessential to know, but it's essential enough to include in this list.

One of the key things this particle is used in, is in the construction used to express one has to do something, such as "I have to go to piano class" or "I need to start working on my homework". This is done using the somewhat awkward pattern of a verb negative in 已然形 + ば + いけない/いけません or verb negative in 已然形 + ば + ならない/なりません. The difference between using the negations for いける and なる is that the first expresses "won't do"/"isn't acceptable" and the second means "shouldn't happen"/"shouldn't come to be":

> ピアノに行(い)かなければなりません。
> [I] should go to piano [now].

Here the verb 行く, "to go", has been placed in negative 已然形 + ば: いかない → いかなければ. This creates the hypothetical situation of "not going", which is then followed by the commentary "なりません" meaning "shouldn't come to be", to literally create "it shouldn't come to be that I will not be going to piano". This is quite a mouthful as literal translation, and one should remember that sometimes translating the intention rather than the words is better: "I should go to piano".

> 自分(じぶん)で動(うご)かなければいけませんよ。
> [You] have to make it move on [your] own.

Here the verb 動く, to move, has been placed in negative 已然形 + ば: 動かない → 動かなければ, creating the hypothetical situation of "not moving", and is followed by disapproval using いけません meaning "won't do". This creates the literal translation "It won't do if you do not move it by yourself", which is translated more to meaning using "You have to make it move on your own."

Colloquially, -なければ can be contracted to -なけりゃ or even -なきゃ, and ならない and いけない can be shortened to ならん and いかん. Remember that these are short forms and are, as ever, only really to be used in informal situations.

7.2.2.14. ね - confirmation seeking

This particle is placed at the end of a sentence when the speaker wants to provoke the listener into agreeing with them. This is a somewhat rhetorical agreement though, and using ね typically means you already expect the response to be something that sounds like an affirmative muttering:

> 榊(さかき) さんは本当(ほんとう)に美人(びじん)ですね。
> Sakaki is really beautiful isn't she?

The unlikely event of hearing "no" as a response to this type of rhetorical confirmation seeking is typically met with much surprise and disbelief, sparking

new depths of conversation since you responded differently than what was expected of you.

7.2.2.15. ねえ - pure rhetoric

By drawing out the え sound in ね, a more rhetoric, and somewhat "staring into the distance" statement is made, with the level of response expected being much less than with ね:

> 休(やす)みっていいねえ。
> Holiday's nice isn't it...

A response to this is typically just something simply like "うん" or "そうねえ" without actually giving it much thought.

7.2.2.16. な - strong confirmation seeking, prohibiting, commanding

Using な instead of ね is a more assertive way to do the exact same thing, somewhat rhetorically asking for confirmation. Because this is a somewhat more assertive particle, it expects a response more than ね does.

However, this particle as sentence ender has a problem, because な after a 連体形 can also mean a prohibiting command, such as in:

> 開(あ)けるな。
> Don't open [that].

The way to tell whether な is a prohibiting command or a confirmation seeking particle, is intonation. If な is accented, it's the confirmation seeking version. If it's unaccented, it's a prohibiting command.

な can also end a sentence that's in 連用形, in which case it's similar to issuing a command using the 連用形 + なさい:

> さっさと起(お)きな。
> Will you get up already.

This type of command is typically issued in a very stern voice, so it's very hard to mistake it for the other two roles that the sentence ending な can have.

7.2.2.17. なあ - strong rhetoric

Similar to how な is the more assertive version of ね, なあ is the more assertive version of ねえ. Typically you will hear women use ね/ねえ more, and men use な/なあ more.

7.2.2.18. よ - emphatic

As final particle in this section I've chosen よ, which is an emphatic sentence ending particle that does not stand for an exclamation mark. I say this, because sometimes people like to say it does. It doesn't. In Japanese, emphasis isn't just done using the voice, but also using explicit markers, similar to how topics and direct objects have explicit markers.

よ in effect marks an entire sentence as something that's been said with more emphasis than usual. For instance:

> 凄(すご)く面白(おもしろ)かった。
> [It] was very fun.
>
> 凄く面白かったよ。
> [It] was very fun. [I mean, really]

There is no difference in the actual translation, but the connotation of よ is more animate, and more enthusiastic.

7.2.3. Less essential particles

While you're learning Japanese, the following fourteen particles are particles that you will end up knowing after about year anyway, but they're not part of the "you really need to know these" set. Just run through them and absorb their function.

7.2.3.1. かな / かなあ - dubitative

This is a combination of the question mark か and the strong confirmation seeking な. Combined they mean something like ”I wonder"/"I guess":

> 植松(うえまつ)さんも来(こ)ないかな(あ)。
> [I] guess Uematsu won't be coming either, huh?
>
> 木曜日(もくようび)に暇(ひま)かな(あ)。
> [I] wonder if [I]'m free Thursday...

7.2.3.2. かしら - effeminate dubitative

かしら is the effeminate version of かな/かなあ, reserved for women (as well as homosexuals and transvestites, in all fairness). Most particles can be used by either gender but may make someone sound effeminate, this particle simply makes you sound gay if you use it as a guy. Literally. People will think you consider yourself feminine.

7.2.3.3. がな / がなあ - hope

This combination particle is used to indicate a hope or wishful thinking, such as in for instance:

> 今日(きょう)もいい天気(てんき)だといいがな(あ)。
> It'd be nice if today had good weather too.

> 今日は電話(でんわ)をかけてくると思(おも)うがなあ。
> [She]'ll call today, [I] think [I hope]...

7.2.3.4. なら - hypothetical conditional

This is actually the hypothetical version of the copula だ, and is used with nouns or verbs in 連体形 form to form a hypothetical conditional, as explained in the nouns and noun adjective chapter:

> 雨(あめ)なら行(い)かないよ。
> [Well,] if [there]'s rain [I]'m not going.

It can also be used to indicate which case validates some hypothesis:

> 先生(せんせい)ならきっと分(わ)かりますよ。
> [I]'m sure the teacher will know [that].

Here the hypothesis "will know" is claimed to hold for the case where it concerns "the teacher".

なら can also be followed by the hypothetical conditional particle ば (explained earlier), to form ならば. This doesn't change the meaning of the particle in any way, but it sounds more formal.

> 先生ならばきっと分かりますよ。
> [I]'m sure the teacher will know [that].

7.2.3.5. し - compounding

This particle is used to list arguments that compound to, or back up, some statement (depending on whether they come before or after this statement respectively). Because of the way Japanese works, the actual statement can be left implied by context; just listing the arguments may lead to a natural indication what the statement should be:

> 面白(おもしろ)くなかったよ。行(い)きたくないと言(い)わなかったか。寒(さむ)かったし、よく聞(き)こえなかって...
> [Well] it wasn't fun. Didn't [I] say [I] didn't want to go? It was cold, [I] couldn't really hear it all that well...

An example of where the conclusion is already implied requires more of a conversation:

> A: じゃあ、買(か)わなかった？
> B: まあ、高(たか)かったし、別(べつ)に重要(じゅうよう)なものもないし...
> A: あ、そっか。
>
> A: So, [you] didn't buy it? (the speaker here is only guessing)
> B: Well, it was expensive, [and] not that it was something that [I] particularly need...
> A: Ah...[is that how things are]

We see here that while left implied, speaker B clearly did not buy whatever the conversation was about.

While it will often suit the translation to combined multiple -し reasons with "and", as this is the word used for compounding in English, a better translation would be "not just ... but also ..." or "what's more, ...". Be careful not to take this word "more" too literally, as し can occur without the actual statement such as in the previous example.

7.2.3.6. こそ - emphatic, similarity

This particle can be considered similar in function to も, except instead of just likening two things to each other, こそ can also "shift" the properties of the original to the instance it is suffixed to instead. This may sound a bit strange, so an example will hopefully make it clearer:

> A: ああ、もすみません。ボーとしてて思(おも)わずぶつかって...
> B: いいえ、いいえ。こちらこそすみません。私(わたし)がもっとしっかりしてたら...

A: Ah, I'm sorry, Not looking at where I was going and just walking into you like that...
B: No, no, it should be me who should be apologising. If I had paid more attention to what was going on...

Aside from an embarrassing moment, speaker B uses こそ with こちら (which is used to refer to himself in this case) to make the act of apologising apply to him more than to speaker A, thus "shifting" the need to apologise from A to B instead.

こそ can also be used on its own, in which case it is perceived as contrasting the stated to everything else, typically being translatable with "exactly" or "precisely":

だからこそ来(き)たんだよ。
But that's *precisely* why [I] came [to visit].

7.2.3.7. ながら - simultaneous action

This particle, which follows a verb in 連用形, or verbal adjectives and nouns directly, signifies that two actions are taking place at the same time, for the same duration of time. This particle is sometimes translated with "while", but this is typically more confusing than helpful, because of the way Japanese clauses are ordered (which, as you may remember, is a most important clause last ordering):

テレビを見(み)ながらご飯(はん)を食(た)べました。
[I] ate dinner while watching the TV.

The last clause, "ご飯を食べました" is the dominant action here, which is why it comes last. In English however, we tend to list the dominant clause first, mentioning the other thing we're doing almost as an afterthought.

As mentioned, using ながら implies that two actions are performed completely simultaneous: they both start and finish at the same time. This means that ながら cannot be used to say for instance things like "I did some shopping while visiting Tokyo today". Trying to say this using ながら would imply that you visited Tokyo by going shopping there, and that's even provided you list the shopping as the dominant clause, otherwise the sentence won't even make sense. Instead, to indicate this kind of loose simultaneous action, the next particle, がてら, is used

7.2.3.8. がてら - simultaneous action

Like ながら, がてら comes after verbs in 連用形 or directly after verbal adjectives and nouns, but unlike ながら, it does not claim two actions to be perfectly

synchronous. Instead, the verb in 連用形+がてら indicates the long verb action, while the one listed afterwards is the shorter one. This might seem odd, since it might seem to contradict the practice of putting the most important part last, but actually the short action is the dominant one in this case. Since the long verb action is going on anyway, the shorter action represents more specific, and thus important, information:

友達(ともだち)を駅(えき)まで送(おく)りがてら買(か)い物(もの)
While bringing [my] friend to the station, [I] went to do some shopping.

がてら can also be written がてらに, explicitly using the particle に to mark the act as a time frame in which the more specific act takes place.

7.2.3.9. とか - representative

Similar in use to と as noun lister, this particle creates a representative list (of one or more items):

飲(の)み物(のみもの) とか食(た)べ物(もの)とか買(か)ってきた。
[I] went to buy stuff like food and drinks.

I say "one or more items" because it can be used on its own to create a representative clause too:

刺身(さしみ)とか嫌(きら)いだ。
[I] hate things like sashimi.

7.2.3.10. とも - emphasis

This particle, while a combination of と + も, doesn't actually act as a similarity marker as you might expect, but instead is actually used to stress the preceding noun or noun phrase in a sentence:

君(きみ)の言(い)う通(とお)りだとも。
It's [exactly] as you say.

This particle comes after 連体形 copnstructions.

7.2.3.11. には - contrastive に

This is a reasonably simple combination of the particle に and the contrasting particle は, but it deserves special mention because a lot of people new to Japanese abuse it a lot, using には instead of just に. A good example of this would be for instance:

テーブルに本(ほん)がある。
There is a book on the table.

There will be people who after a while start to ignore that this is a proper sentence, and instead say things like:

テーブルには本がある。
There is a book on the table [unlike on the floor, or on the couch, or on the shelf, or on whatever context might be contrasted to].

It should always be remembered that には is a contrastive. It doesn't just specify a location or point/frame in time, but also adds a contrast between this location or time and every other. This is a very important distinction that you should try not to forget. If you're tempted to use には, first ask yourself if you are actually trying to sketch a contrast. If you're not, just use に. Don't use the additional は because you think it "sounds good", because it adds a lot of extra meaning that you probably don't intend to add.

That said, a proper use would for instance be:

ここにはそんな物(もの)はありませんよ。
[We] don't have those kind of things here.

In this sentence, the は makes sense, because no doubt there will be other places where "those kind of things" can in fact be found. Just not "here".

7.2.3.12. ほど - extent

This particle is not so hard to use, but it has a particular pattern of use that sometimes confuses people new to it. For this reason, it's probably easiest to say that 程(ほど) stands for 'extent' of actions, consequences, or even of properties. For instance, するほど would translate to "the extent of doing". Similarly, 高いほど would be 'the extent of the height', etc.

This marking of extent is quite useful when comparing items: where A も B も gives a similarity, and A より B makes B more [something] than A, A ほど B makes the extents of A and B the same. For instance:

高(たか)いほど美味(おい)しい。
As tasty as it is pricey.
lit: To the extent that it is pricey, it is tasty.

In effect, this A ほど B sets up a proportional relation between the concepts A and B. Another example to illustrate this:

するほど上手(じょうず)になる。
Getting better the more [you] do it.
lit: To the extent of doing it, one gets better [at it].

Hopefully this makes the following sentence understandable:

美術(びじゅつ)は見(み)れば見るほど美(うつく)しい。

Before offering the translation, I'll give you the translation for the individual words, in the hope that what I end up offering as translation seems obvious: 美術 means art, 見る means 'to watch/to look at' and 美しい means beautiful. Literally this sentence would come down to "Art, should one look at it, to the extent of looking at it, it's beautiful". The trick is now of course to turn this literal translation into something that actually makes sense in English:

> "As far as Art goes, the more [you] look at it, the more beautiful it becomes."

Hopefully at this point you'll go "yes, that's obvious". If so, then good. If not, then that's in line with what many people experience when they first come across ほど used in this particular sense. The following pattern, where A is a verb and B is some statement,

A in 已然形 + ば A ほど B

translates to "The more one A's, the more B". We saw this in the previous sentence, another example is:

聞(き)けば聞くほど分(わ)かってくるよ。
The more [you] listen to it, the better [you]'ll understand it.

The reason it means this, is because the extents of the initial verb action 聞く and the conclusion 分かってくる are linked by ほど. Just as ほど can be used for a "the more A, the more B", it can be used to construct a negative "The more A, the less B" sentence:

車(くるま)は安(やす)いほど美(うつく)しくないものだ。
The cheaper cars are, the uglier they are.

One of the things that tends to trip up people a lot with 程 is the fact that even though the full pattern has three verbs, the translation has only two. The thing to remember is that [A ば A ほど] is one semantic block meaning "to the extend of doing A", so the Japanese may have the verb A twice, but the translation only needs it once.

7.2.3.13. ばかり - only, just (drowning out everything else)

As mentioned in the explanation of だけ, ばかり is used for things that are repetitive or drown out everything else, such as in for instance the following sentence:

> うそばかり付(つ)ける人(ひと)が嫌(きら)いです。
> [I] hate people who only tell lies.

In this sentence ばかり has to be used, if we want to indicate not just telling a lie once or twice, but always telling lies, i.e. only telling lies rather than truths.

Another use is with verbs in plain past tense, to indicate only just moments ago having completed the verb action:

> 作(つく)ったばかりのクッキー
> cookies that have just been made

ばかり can also be written ばっかり, in which case it carries just a bit more emphasis, and can also be used as ばかし or ばっかし without any serious difference, other than that ばかし sounds a bit more effeminate than ばかり.

7.2.3.14. もの - experience, social custom, because

As mentioned in the outline, when こと and もの were treated as special nouns, もの is used to conceptualise something as real, be it tangible or intangible. Because of this, it can fulfil a few roles, such as listing an experience:

> 私(わたし)たちは子供(こども)の時(とき)に正(ただ)しく育(そだ)ったもの。
> We were raised properly when we were children.

Here もの indicates that 正しく育った is a real, albeit intangible, thing. Because it is past tense, the only real thing it can be is the speaker's own experience. When used with present tense, the only way intangible things can be real is if they are somehow common place, or social customs:

> 人(ひと)に迷惑(めいわく)をかけないものです。
> One should not cause problems for others.
> (lit: it is a thing to "not be a bother to people")

Colloquially, もの can be shortened to もん, but this typically makes the speaker sound "childish":

A: なんでお前(まえ)アンパンばかり食(く)うのかよ。
B: だって、好(す)きだもん〜。

A: Why the heck do you always eat anpan?
B: Because I like it~.

It shouldn't come as a surprise that you shouldn't really use this form unless you're actually a girl and in secondary school. Or you are trying to emulate one. Which you shouldn't.

7.2.4. Non-essential particles

The final 30 particles in the list represent particles which I believe to be the least important ones to know. If you're serious about Japanese, you're going to end up knowing them anyway, because they get used enough to encounter them with a certain frequency, but they're particles that don't really deserve much attention until you know the others by heart.

7.2.4.1. っけ - dubitative, recollecting

This is a particle that is used when asking oneself a question such as when trying to recall something:

電話番号(でんわばんごう)は何(なん)だっけ。
Now what was the phone number again...

7.2.4.2. って - quoting

This is a short form of と言(い)って(も)/として(も), which can be used in a fashion similar to the quoting particle と:

何(なん)ですって？
What did [you] say?

Somewhat confusingly, it's sometimes also used as normal quoting particle:

来(く)るって言(い)ったのに、どうして来(こ)なかったの。
Even though [you] said [you] would come, why didn't [you]?

7.2.4.3. きり / ぎり / っきり - only, merely

きり, and its voiced and stopped versions ぎり and っきり are used to "single things out". They've come from 切(き)る, to cut, and this is an indication of how

they're used. Added to a clause it indicates that "this and only this" clause is in effect. To make this a bit more clear, a few examples:

> 日本(にほん)にはただ一度(いちど)行(い)ったきりです。
> [I] have only once been to Japan.

Here the act of "going to Japan" has been performed once, and きり is used to indicate that this once is understood as "once and only once", rather than the "once" as used in for instance "I've been there once when it was hot, and ..." which actually doesn't precluding having gone to a place multiple times.

> その仕事(しごと)を一人(ひとり)きりでしたんだ。
> [I] did that job all [alone] by [myself].

Here, きり is used to make it explicit that there was no one else to even do the job other than "myself". If we compare this sentence to a similar sentence that uses だけ instead we see:

> その仕事を一人だけでしたんだ。
> [I] did that job alone.

We see that this sentence doesn't actually rule out the possibility that others may have been available to help out, and that in this case we did it ourselves for whatever reason. In contrast, the line with きり says that at the time of doing this job, there was just me, and no one else.

> あの人には一度会(あ)ったきりで、その後(ご)は付(つ)き合(あ)ってませんでした。
> [I]'ve only met that person once, [I] haven't been with them since.

Here きり is used to indicate that the event of meeting this person was a singular event.

The difference between using きり, ぎり and っきり is mainly a colloquial one, related to 'what sounds good'. In colloquially relaxed speech, ぎり will work better than きり, and if one wants to put extra emphasis on the "singling out", っきり works better than きり. It is mostly a question of hearing it often enough to develop a feel for which is best in which setting.

7.2.4.4. くらい / ぐらい - estimated extent

This particle is used to estimate an extent. This means it can be used to indicate extent of quantity, duration, frequency or even reasoning:

A: とりあえず、５０ページくらい読(よ)まなければなりません。
B: 三十分(さんじっぷん)くらい読みましょうか。
C: 一日(いちにち)に３時間(じかん)ぐらい読みます。
D: それぐらい分(わ)かってるよ。

A: [I] need to read about 50 pages for now.
B: Let [me] read for about 30 minutes.
C: [I] read about 3 hours a day.
D: [I] understand that much [now explain the parts I don't understand yet].

The difference between the normal unvoiced version, くらい, and the voiced version, ぐらい, is that the second is a more colloquial, relaxed version of the first. This means that the context in which they're used is subtly different. The best way to get a feel for which to use when, is to hear it used often enough.

7.2.4.5. ころ / ごろ - loose time frame

While くらい is used for estimation of extent, ころ is used for estimation of a moment in time. For instance "I need to be at work around 9" would be an instance where ころ rather than ぐらい would be used, since this does not concern some measurable extent, but a clock time.

母(かあ)さんが三時(さんじ)ごろ迎(むか)えに来(く)るって。
Mom said she'd come to pick [us] up around 3.

Similar to くらい, the use of ころ vs. ごろ is mostly dictated by whether it's okay to use a colloquially relaxed version or not. Again, the best way to learn when this is, is to hear it used often enough to get a feel for it.

7.2.4.6. さ - strong よ

There are actually two ways this particle can be used. Firstly, as a sentence ender, in which case it is a slightly more emphatic version of よ, typically used when one wants to emphasise being informative rather than just being more emphatic in general:

今日(きょう)も 授業(じゅぎょう) に出(で)なかったさ。もしかして、病気(びょうき)？
[He] didn't come to class today either. [Do you think] maybe [he's] sick?

Another use is similar in role to putting ですね, でね or ね after subclauses in a phrase. This has as general purpose to keep drawing the attention of your listener and makes a conversation more engaging (unless you overdo it of course).

For instance, the following sentence would be very engaging (to the point of being somewhat too engaging):

> それでね、私(わたし)はね、君子(きみこ)さんにですね、これをくれたんだ。
> So then [ne] I [ne] was given this by Kimiko [desu ne].

This sentence grabs the listener's attention three times before actually finishing. さ can be used in the same way, but it does sound more "stuck up" than using ですね, でね or just ね:

> それでさ、私はさ、君子さんにさ、これをくれたんだ。
> So then [sa] I [sa] was given this by Kimiko [sa].

7.2.4.7. ぜ, ぞ - colloquial strong よ

These particles are 'rough' versions of よ, being fairly colloquial and fairly informal familiar. You might use them around the house, or with your good friends, or when trying to sound cool when picking up girls, when angry at someone for doing something completely stupid, or any other situation in which informal familiar speech is used.

7.2.4.8. わ - effeminate よ, emphatic や

As sentence ender, this particle leads two lives. In standard Japanese, わ is used as an emphatic sentence ender, similar よ, but is considered an effeminate particle, like かしら. In the more rural parts of Japan, and most readily recognisably in the kansai area, わ is also used as よ, but is not considered effeminate in any way and is used by everyone.

わ can also be used in the same way as や, in which case it is a very emphatic open listing particle.

7.2.4.9. ずつ - equal distribution

This particle is used to indicate some equal distribution of something, over something else. For instance "These oranges are 80 yen a piece" or "Every pair will share 1 book". In the first line, there's an equal distribution of price over every orange:

> オレンジが一(ひと)つずつで八十円(はちじゅうえん)だ。
> Oranges are 80 yen a piece.
> lit: Oranges are per one [being the same for each], 80 yen.

In the second line, there is an equal distribution of how many items are distributed over a certain number of people, using ...に...ずつ:

本(ほん)は二人(ふたり)に一冊(いっさつ)ずつ分(わ)け合(あ)うんだ。
Each pair will [have to] share one book.
lit: As for the books, to two people, one book [to each group of two] will be shared

7.2.4.10. だって - even, whether, generalisation

Considered a colloquial emphatic version of でも, this particle actually is a contraction of だ + とて, the copula plus a particle that I won't bother treating because it's no longer in use as such and has been functionally replaced by たって/って.

じいちゃんだって、それぐらい分(わ)かるよ。
Even grandpa knows that.

In this role it's not really different from でも.

だって can also be used in a listing fashion, in which case it stands for a pattern similar to "whether ... or ... [or ...], it's all the same":

君(きみ)だって、僕(ぼく)だって、みんな仲間(なかま)だ。
You, me, we're all friends.

(the translation of 仲間 is actually more nuanced than 'friend', referring to being part of the in-group)

As can be seen from this sentence, the final clause applies to all the "items" listed using だって in this fashion.

A final role is played by だって as a sentence ending particle, in which case it acts as a quotation that the speaker is surprised about:

土曜日(どようび)も彼(かれ)とデートだからだって。別(わ)かれなかったか、あの二人(ふたり)は？
[She] said it was because [she] had a date with him on Saturday. Hadn't those two broken up?

In this sentence the speaker expresses a surprise over hearing what is being quoted, and explains this surprise with the following sentence. Notice that these are two separate sentences, the 。 is very much required after だって in this use.

7.2.4.11. たって - even, whether, generalisation

Similar to how だって maps to でも, たって maps to the verbal ても form. Just like the て form, this "particle" contracts with verbs whose -た/-て forms have contractions, so for instance 遊(あそ)ぶ, to play, becomes 遊んだって.

> 今更(いまさら)言(い)ったって、もう遅(おそ)いわ。
> Even if [you] say so now, it's too late [now].

Also, when written as ったって this particle stands for the contraction of と言(い)っても: といったって → ったって. Used in this way it can mean both と言っても or としても:

> 今(いま)それを直(なお)そうったって無駄(むだ)だ。
> It's pointless to try to fix it now.

7.2.4.12. だけに - since, because

A combination of だけ + に, this compound particle expresses "since ...", "because ..." similar to ので.

> 期待(きたい)していなかっただけに、喜(よろこ)びは大(おお)きい。
> Because [I] I hadn't been expecting it, [I] was most delighted.
>
> (Literally, this sentence uses the noun form for 'being delighted')

7.2.4.13. だの - representative listing

This particle hangs somewhere between と and や when making a list. It creates a list of items, but also implies that this list is representative of something. For instance:

> 犬(いぬ)だの猫(ねこ)だの、色(いろ)んなものを飼(か)っている。
> Dogs, cats, we keep all sorts of pets.

While the list doesn't actually imply that there may be more than just dogs and cats, unlike や, the list alone is already considered something representative of, in this case, "all sorts of". And unlike と, this list doesn't have to be inclusive. It could be that whoever says this may also have birds and rabbits, but then again, they may just as well not.

7.2.4.14. ったら - emphatic

This particle is a contraction of と言(い)ったら, and like the next particle, is used to catch someone's attention if you've been talking to them and they're being unresponsive. This is a very informal way to grab someone's attention as well as point out that they should listen to you:

> ね。ね！ねったら！
> Hey. Hey! I said Hey!

This particle is slightly more reserved than ってば, so you may want to avoid using it if you don't want to come over as reserved, or even effeminate.

7.2.4.15. ってば -emphatic

This particle is a contraction of と言(い)えば (when talking about ...) and is often used to grab someone's attention, similar to ったら:

> おい、聞(き)いてるかよ。お〜い。おいってば！
> Hey, are [you] listening or what? Helloooo? I said, hello!?

7.2.4.16. など / なんか - approximation (like...)

This is a rough listing particle, similar to とか in use. This particle has come from 何(なに)と through 何(なん)ど to the current など. The difference between など and とか is a very subtle one: など is even less specific than とか. While とか is an inclusive representative list, など doesn't actually in any way imply that the items used with it are actually part of what's being described:

> 牛(うし)など飼(か)わない方(ほう)がいいよ。
> It's better not to keep things like cows. (note: keep here refers to the keeping of for instance pets)
>
> 牛とか飼わない方がいいよ。
> It's better not to keep cows and the like.

Using など, the sentence only says that things "like cows" are best not kept. This doesn't actually say anything about cows, but completely disregards the exact match, and only talks about things like them. In contrast, とか inclusively remarks about things "like cows", actually meaning "cows, and things like cows". In effect, if these particles were math, one could say that A とか stands equal to A と A など: "A and the like" = "A, and things like A".

Like とか, this particle can be used both for listing, as well as single use as in the previous example sentences. When used for listing, the same generality applies: it's not inclusive per se.

私(わたし)は数学(すうがく)や科学(かがく)などに弱(よわ)いです。
I'm bad (weak) at stuff like maths and chemistry.

Again, this doesn't explicitly say we're actually bad at math and chemistry, but only implies it since math is fairly "like math", and chemistry is fairly "like chemistry".

The colloquial version of this particle is, somewhat surprisingly, なんか (which is less surprising if など's origin is considered). This colloquial version is not used for the listing version of など, but only for the singular use:

安物(やすもの)なんかに興味(きょうみ)はないよ。
[I] don't care for [things like] cheap stuff.

7.2.4.17. やら - uncertainty

This particle indicates an element of uncertainty in the speaker, such as for instance:

どうやら間(ま)に合(あ)ったようですね。
It looks like [we] somehow made it in time, doesn't it?

This particle can also be used instead of か after question words to create the indeterminate instance word instead:

何(なに)やら白(しろ)い物(もの)が浮(う)いている。
There seems to be something white floating [there].

This has the same meaning as 何か白い物が浮いている。

7.2.4.18. どころ+negative - extent, impossibility

This particle is typically used in the pattern [...]どころではない, to indicate an impossibility:

こう忙(いそが)しくては旅行(りょこう)どころではない。
Being this busy, it's impossible [for me] to go on a trip.

It can also be used in a way similar to ほど to indicate an extent:

困(こま)るどころの騒(さわ)ぎじゃない。
"No need to cause a fuss over this problem."

This sentence is somewhat hard to properly translate due to どころ, and a more literal translation would be "this isn't [something that should be] caused a fuss [over] to the extent that [you are] troubled".

This is technically a voiced version of ところ, 所, which will be treated in the section on nominalisers.

7.2.4.19. どころか - high contrastive (in contrast to..., as opposed to ..., rather than...)

This particle is somewhat akin to より, except it only applies to events/circumstances, and is much stronger than より. It creates a construction that can be translated with "Instead of ..., [something implies the total opposite]":

友達(ともだち)と遊(あそ)ぶどころか、一晩(ひとばん)に宿題(しゅくだい)をしたんだ。
Instead of going out with [my] friends, [I] spent the entire night working on [my] homework.

7.2.4.20. なんと - approximation (or something)

This particle is essentially the question word 何(なに) paired with the quoting particle と, to create an emphatic "what" such as in "what a pretty bird" or "you did what??":

なんときれいな星空(ほしぞら)だろう。
What a pretty starry sky.

This particle is particularly used in combination with -なく, the 連用形 for ない, to create the word なんとなく, meaning "for no reason":

A: どうして殴(なぐ)ったの。
B: いや、なんとなく。

A: Why did [you] hit [him]?
B: I just felt like it

(This is a semantic translation, literally B says "For no [good] reason" as open sentence)

The colloquial version, なんて, can also be used to mean 何と言う, and is typically used in an exclamatory fashion:

> なんて事(こと)をしたんだ？
> "What [on earth] did [you] do?"

7.2.4.21. ながらも - contrastive (even while)

This is simply a compound particle consisting of ながら and the emphatic contrastive も:

> 休(やす)みながらも仕事(しごと)のこと考(かんが)えてばっかり。
> Even while on break, all [I]'m thinking about is [my] work.

7.2.4.22. なり - either/or, as soon as

This particle can mean two things, depending on whether it's used on its own or as a two-item "list":

> 困(こま)ったときには、父(ちち)なり母(はは)なりに相談(そうだん)することです。
> When [you]'re troubled, [you] should talk to either [your] mother or father.
> (lit: when troubled, the concept is to consult your father or mother.)

This list use is very different from the singular use:

> 疲(つか)れていたから、帰(かえ)るなり晩(ばん)ご飯(はん)を食(た)べずに寝(ね)てしまった。
> Because [she] was tired, [she] went to bed the moment [she] got home, without having dinner.

Here the literal translation would be "Because [she] was tired, the moment [she] got home, [she] went to bed without eating dinner."

7.2.4.23. にて - location (at, in)

This is the more literary equivalent to the particle で (note, the particle, not the て form of です).

7.2.4.24. ほか - only option

Similar to しか, ほか indicates only one course of action or only one option:

> 一人(ひとり)で暮(く)らすほかしょうがない。
> There's nothing [I] can do [about the fact that] [I] live on [my] own.
> (lit: other than living on my own, there's nothing to be done)

This particle can be interchangeably used with しか, but the connotation is different:

> 一人で暮らすしかしょうがない。
> There's nothing [I] can do [about the fact that] [I] live on [my] own.
> (lit: save living on my own, there's nothing to be done)

This "other than" vs. "save" connotation is the only real difference between the two.

Do not confuse this particle with the nouns 他 and 外, which are both read as ほか.

7.2.4.25. までも - emphatic

This is just まで combined with the emphatic も, to create a construction signifying extreme extent, similar to にしても, "even doing ..." (remember that にする means "to decide", in this case this is used to signify "even if you decide to do ..., [clause that will not be affected by doing so]"):

> そこまでもするんですか。
> [You] would even go so far as to do that?
> (lit: up to the extent of that, [you] would do so?)

までも can be used with the question words いつ (when) and どこ (where) to create the words いつまでも, meaning "up to any moment in time" ("until when") and どこまでも, meaning "up to any place" ("up till any place"):

> いつまでもテレビを見(み)るつもり？
> Just how long do [you] plan on watching TV?
> (lit: up to which moment in time do you intend to watch TV)

Note that when までも is paired up with a verb in て form, までも is split up:

> どこまで見(み)ても、青空(あおぞら)です。
> No matter where [you] look, it's blue skies.
> (lit: up till any point you can hypothetically look at, it's blue sky)

7.2.4.26. さえ - even/only

Typically used preceded by で, さえ is yet another "even", being similar to でも, or だけ. However, where だけ means "only" in the "just" way, さえ means "only" in the "at least"/"as long as only" way:

子供(こども)でさえ知(し)ってるよ。
Even children know this.

孔子(こうし)でさえ欠点(けってん)あるが免(まぬか)れなかった。
Even Confucius was not free of flaws.

お金(かね)さえあれば、のんびりしててもいい。
As long as [you] [only] have money, [you] can [just] take it easy.

7.2.4.27. すら - not even

This particle is related to さえ in the similar way that しか and だけ are related, and is followed by a negative to express a "not even" construction:

手紙(てがみ)すら満足(まんぞく)に書(か)けない。
[I] cannot even write a letter to [my] satisfaction.

7.2.4.28. ものか - emphatic negative

This is simply the sentence ending もの, used to indicate a custom or social expectation of sorts, followed by the question particle か in its "Like I ..." meaning:

そんなこと知(し)るものか。
Like [I] would [be expected to] know something like that!

As mentioned in the explanation of か, this is one of the rare instances where you will nearly always be able to translate the construction with an exclamation mark, due to the use of this particularly expressive か. Notice that this sentence is almost the same as:

そんなこと知るか。
Like [I] would know something like that!

except that the use of もの makes the statement more questioning the expectation rather than the act:

そんなこと知るか。
Like [I] know something like that!

そんなこと知るものか。
Like [I] (should) know something like that!

7.2.4.29. もので - reasoning (comma)

This is just the particle もの, used to indicate a custom or social expectation, paired with the て form of the copula, で, to create an implicit reason:

> 客(きゃく)として迷惑(めいわく)をかけないようにするもので、大人(おとな)しく静(しず)かに座(すわ)っててなさい。
> Because being guests means not causing (unnecessary) problems [for the host], [just] sit [here] quietly "in a grown up way".

7.2.4.30. ものの - even though

This combination particle is quite interesting; the combination of もの with の is functionally equivalent to the particles け(れ)ど(も) / のに:

> 「PowerMac」を買(か)ったものの、使(つか)い方(かた)が全然分(ぜんぜんわ)からない。
> Even though [I] bought a Power Mac, [I] actually don't know how to use it at all.

This sentence isn't significantly different from the same sentence but using のに or けど:

> 「PowerMac」を買ったのに、使い方が全然分からない。
> Even though [I] bought a Power Mac, [I] actually don't know how to use it at all.

> 「PowerMac」を買ったけど、使い方が全然分からない。
> [I] bought a Power Mac. However, [I] actually don't know how to use it at all.

The similarity will typically be closer to け(れ)ど(も) than to のに, as the use of もの creates a factoid, and the の is used to, in a way that could be called genitively, relate the concluding remark to this factoid:

> [「PowerMac」を買ったもの] の [使い方が全然分からない。]
>
> (I bought a powermac)'s (I do not know how to use it at all)

7.2.5. Even more particles

This isn't all there is, There aren't only 72 particles (plus variations) in the Japanese language, there are many more, and you will find nice collections of them in particle dictionaries (available in Japanese only as well as translated or even primarily written in English). Listing every particle in the Japanese language here would probably result in twice the amount of particles covered so far, and that's excluding counter particles, of which there are so many that one could make a dictionary for just counters that would rival the size of a normal particle dictionary. Should you be interested in learning more particles, it deserves strong recommendation to actively engage in Japanese conversation, read Japanese texts, watch Japanese video material, listen to Japanese radio, and buy a particle dictionary to look up specific meanings. For now, we will consider the normal particle section closed and will continue to look at nominalisers, which work in the same way as particles, but play a slightly different role, given away by their name.

7.3. Nominalisers

Nominalisers are those words that turn clauses or phrases into noun phrases, so that they can be used in larger sentences as topics, subjects, direct objects or what have you. We have already seen some nominalisers in the particle section (such as の, もの and こと), and these will be further explained in their role as nominaliser in this section. It should be noted that most nominalisers require specific particles to follow them in order to work the way they do, so when studying nominalisers, don't just study the words, but also remember which nominalisers take which particles.

7.3.1. Back referral using の

The simplest nominaliser is just the nominalising の. This turns any clause that precedes it into a back referral to something either previously mentioned, or previously established as topic somehow. Say we have the following sentence:

> 美術館(びじゅつかん)を見(み)に行(い)く。
> Going to an art gallery.

We can nominalise this sentence into a back referral using の by appending it to this sentence:

> 美術館を見に行くの

This has no direct translation on its own, but requires a bigger context to operate in; on its own it can mean anything that can be approximated with "the [going to the art gallery]". Only when used in a bigger sentence will this noun clause really make sense:

美術館を見に行くのが楽(たの)しかった。
Going to [the] art gallery [today] was fun.

Here, the noun phrase has been turned into a back referral to something that happened, similar to the 歩くの[...] sentence used in the quintessential particles list for the particle の.

7.3.2. Abstract conceptualisation using 事(こと)

こと is used to turn clauses into an abstract though, rather than the actual thing. For instance:

勉強(べんきょう)しにアメリカに行(い)く事(こと)がまだよく考(かんが)えていません。
[I] have not yet seriously considered whether or not to go to America to study.

Here, the clause 勉強しにアメリカに行く, "to go to America to study", has been turned into an abstract idea, about which the comment "I have not yet really thought about it" is made.

Another example of the use of こと can be seen in the following example:

私(わたし)の言(い)った事に何(なに)か付(つ)け加(くわ)える事はありませんか。
Would [you] like to add anything to what [I]'ve said?

In this sentence, there are two abstractions going on: one is the abstraction of 言った, "said" to 言った事 , "the thing that was said", and the second from 付け加える, "to add" (a compound verb coming from 付ける, "to attach", and 加える, "to add") to 付け加える事, "[a] thing to add".

It should be noted that these are genuine abstractions; 言ったこと does not only refer to the actually spoken words, but also the thoughts that they stood for, and 付け加える likewise stands not just for words, but for thoughts that can be added to the already existent thoughts on whatever was being discussed.

This plain past tense + 事 is also used to ask whether or not someone has experience with something, in the pattern [plain past tense] + ことがある:

フランスに行ったことがありますか。
Have [you] ever been to France?

This sentence literally reads "Do you have 'going to France'?". This implies having the experience of going to France, as there is no real other way one can "have" a concept like this. Unlike もの, which deals with real past experiences, 事 asks something about the abstract concept of, in this case, 'going to France'. This

abstraction is quite necessary: asking more directly, such as フランスに行きましたか actually presumes that regardless of the destination someone actually went somewhere to begin with, which may not be the case at all. The abstraction is required to talk about the act of going to France as a concept.

7.3.3. Real conceptualisation using 物(もの)

As mentioned in the outline, もの conceptualises real, but not necessarily tangible, things. For instance, the following sentence is about a very intangible, but very real thing:

> いつまでもその秘密(ひみつ)を隠(かく)しておけるものじゃないよ。
> [You] can't keep that secret hidden forever.

Here, 秘密を隠しておける, "to be able to keep a secret a secret" is conceptualised using もの to form 秘密を隠しておけるもの which translates to "that which is 'being able to keep a secret secret'". This is different from an abstraction using こと:

> 秘密を隠しておけること
> The concept 'being able to keep a secret a secret'
>
> いつまでもその秘密を隠しておけること
> The concept 'being able to keep that secret a secret forever'

This concept can be talked about as for instance 'being hard' or 'being impossible', or even 'is unnatural', whereas:

> 秘密を隠しておけるもの
> That which is 'being able to keep a secret a secret'

or

> いつまでもその秘密を隠しておけるもの
> That which is 'being able to keep that secret a secret forever'

can only be talked about as existing or not, but that's roughly it. The concept of being able to keep a secret hidden from the rest of the world is something abstract, while the actual act of being able to keep some secret hidden is concrete. For the abstract idea, こと is used. For the concrete event, もの is used.

7.3.4. Illustrating a circumstance, case or occasion using 場合(ばあい)

When you want to illustrate an occasion, circumstance or situation, you use the nominaliser ばあい, which is typically followed by the particle に to indicate point in time. Used as a noun on its own, 場合 has these same meanings:

> 場合によって違(ちが)います。
> It depends on the circumstance.
> (lit: it is different depending on circumstances)

Used as nominaliser it turns the preceding part into a circumstance to which something applies:

> 君(きみ)の場合には例外(れいがい)とする。
> [We]'ll consider your case an exception.

In this sentence the clause 君, a personal pronoun meaning "you", has been paired with 場合 to create "your circumstance", about which a comment is made. 場合 can of course also be used for verb phrases, in which case it follows the 連体形:

> お金(かね)が足(た)りない場合(ばあい)には友達(ともだち)から借(か)ります。
> In case [I] don't have enough money, [I]'ll borrow it off [my] friends.

In this sentence the clause お金が足りない, "[I] do not have enough (sufficient) money" has been turned into a circumstance, leading to the comment on it when this should happen.

7.3.5. Indicating a moment of opportunity using 次第(しだい)

If we look at the kanji form of this nominaliser we see 次(つぎ) meaning "next" and 第(だい) meaning "number"/"instance". Basically the combination しだい means "the next time [some event]", and thus nominalises clauses to the next time they occur:

> 見(み)つけ次第知(し)らせて下(くだ)さい。
> Please let [me] know the moment [you] find out

This sentence turns the clause 見つけ, the 連用形 for 見つける, "to discover/find out", into a moment of opportunity should it occur, where the action to then take is to let someone know of this discovery.

In this use, 次第 follows verbs in 連用形. It can also come after 連体形 forms, but when used this way the meaning of 次第 is the same as that of わけ (訳), treated later on.

7.3.6. Describing an occurrence using 度(たび)

If you want to describe something that occurs or can occur at times, then たび lets you say something general about these occurrences. This is in part obvious because of the kanji for たび, 度, which is typically pronounced ど and means "-time", such as 一度, "one time" or 三度, "three times".

> 星空(ほしぞら)を見(み)るたびに、あの夜(よる)のことを思(おも)い出(だ)す。
> Whenever [I] look up at a starry sky, [I] remember that (special) night.

Here the clause 星空を見る, "looking up at a starry sky" is presented as something that occurs with some frequency, and a comment on what is associated to this occurrence is then given.

度 nominalises sentences in 連体形.

7.3.7. Indicating a specific time or event using 時(とき)

時 on its own means "time", which explains why it does what it does. This nominaliser can be used either by itself or followed by に or は.

> 初(はじ)めて日本(にほん)に来(き)たときにまだ十八歳(じゅうはっさい)だった。
> When [I] first came to Japan, [I] was only 18.

Here the clause 日本に来た, "came to Japan" is modified with 初めて, "for the first time", and turned into a specific time/event using とき, after which a comment about this specific time/event is made.

時 nominalises sentences in 連体形.

7.3.8. Stating an expectation using 筈(はず)

As explained earlier, there are two versions of "should" in languages such as English. The "must" version of should, and the "expect" version of should, illustrated by "you should clean up your room" and "the train should be coming any time now" respectively. This second version of "should" is what はず is used for:

今日(きょう)はみんなが来(く)るはずなんだ。
It should be that everyone will come today.

Here the clause みんなが来る, "everyone will come" is turned into the expectancy that everyone will come, using はず.

7.3.9. Stating a social expectation or custom using べき

Where はず was used to indicate the expecting "should, べき is used to indicate the somewhat imperative "should". Now, this is a genuinely strange word: technically べき, also used as べし, is a classical verb, with its own set of conjugational bases:

未然形	べから
連用形	べく (べかり)
modern 連体形	べし (from 終止形) / べき(from 連体形) (べかる)
已然形	べけれ

However, this verb is anything but regular, and to make things more confusing べき is actually used as a noun, where inflections are constructed using the copula です instead. This word then is actually a remnant of classical Japanese that defies modern word classes, so we're kind of left with exploring it as the need arises. In this case, as the nominaliser べき, where it turns phrases in 連体形 into a social expectation:

君(きみ)が責任(せきにん)を取(とる)るべきだったのだ。
You should have taken responsibility.

Here the clause 責任を取る, "to take responsibility", is illustrated as being something that is socially expected from someone in whichever context this phrase was said in. Sometimes this social expectation is a given, or common sense, but sometimes the expectation is very context dependent, such as:

真面目(まじめ)に英語(えいご)を 勉強(べんきょう) すべきです。
[You] should study English seriously.

Here the clause 真面目に英語を勉強する, "to study English seriously", is turned into a social expectation because of the behaviour of whoever it is said to right now. Probably, they are goofing off, while a "proper" person would be studying hard in order to meet the social standards.

This sentence also shows a special contraction when using べき with する, in that it turns into すべき instead of するべき as expected.

7.3.10. Indicating a moment in time or 'spot' using ところ (所)

This word takes a clause and turns it into a nominalisation representing a point in time space. For instance:

> もうすぐ式(しき)が始(はじ)まるところだ。
> The ceremony will start soon.

This sentence literally says "We will soon be at the point where the ceremony starts".

> 彼女(かのじょ)といるところに、友達(ともだち)に来(こ)られた。
> Just as [I] was (together) with my girlfriend, [I] was imposed upon by a friend.

This sentence literally says "at the point of being with my girlfriend, I was ..."

While ところ on its own means "place", and can be followed by several particles, as nominaliser it is typically followed by either に or で, depending on whether the focus of the sentence has to lie with the place or time, or with the event that occurs.

7.3.11. Stating an intention using 積(つ)もり

Derived from the verb 積もる, "to intend", the nominaliser つもり turns a 連体形 clause into an intention:

> 今日(きょう)和歌山(わかやま)まで行(い)くつもりだ。
> [We] intend to go up to Wakayama today.

In this sentence, the clause 和歌山まで行く, "going up to Wakayama", is turned into an intention. Notice that this nominaliser really only states intention. Planning, rather than intending, is indicated using the noun 予定(よてい), "plan", instead.

To indicate a negative intention, generally the statement "[I] don't have the intention to ..." is used:

> もし彼(かれ)が 一生懸命(いっしょうけんめい)働(はたら) くつもりがないなら、くびだ。
> If he has no intention to work hard, he will be fired.

Literally this sentence reads "Should he have no intention to work hard, it'll be his head". Aside from this nice reference to how being fired was handled in the old days, it also shows how a negative intention is used.

7.3.12. Stating a meaning or situational explanation using 訳(わけ)

This nominaliser is somewhat interesting in that it's next to impossible (or neccesary) to translate, because it denotes situational commentary. In English, we leave the situation outside our conversations, but in Japanese you can use this word to indicate you are directly commenting on the situation at hand, commenting in an explanatory or reasoning way on it. Typically a sentence translation is just fine with it left untranslated, but clearly because of what it does its presence in a Japanese sentence makes quite a difference:

まだ有罪(ゆうざい)にならなかった。
[He] has not been proven guilty yet.

まだ有罪になった訳ではない。
[He] has not been proven guilty yet.

The first sentence states that some "he" hasn't been proven guilty yet, as a factoid. The second sentence, however, states the same but does so in order to counter something that was said or was concluded that might imply the opposite. For instance, consider the following conversation:

A: 石田(いしだ)さんが首(くび)になったそうです。
B: うん、首になった。
A: もっと 一生懸命(いっしょうけんめい) に 働(はたら) いたら…
B: いいえ、そう言(い)うわけじゃないけど。
A: ならどうして？
B: 会社(かいしゃ)が生産 調整(せいさんちょうえい) したから数人(すうにん)が解雇(かいこ)された。

A: I heard Ishida got fired.
B: Yeah, he did.
A: If only he'd worked harder...
B: No, that's not it.
A: Then why?
B: The company has cut back on production so several people were laid off

In the third sentence, B more literally says "no, the just-said (そう言う) is not the reason for [what we're talking about]". While in English both "that's not the reason" and "that's not it" work, if we were to use a sentence without わけ in

Japanese, we'd be left with a somewhat nonsensical line そう言わないけど, "however, [I] do not say [that]".

This use of と言う paired with 訳 is fairly standard, and indicates a description of the situational comment. Imagine the situation where someone is being held accountable for low grades on their language courses, and they are asked to explain why:

> 別に語学に能力がないと言う訳ないが……まあ、基本敵につまらないんだよ。
> [well,] It's not particularly because [I] don't have the brains to learn languages, but ...well, it's just boring.

Here the situational comment is made in regards to the misunderstanding that exists in it. The situational aspect that is being commented on is described by と言う as being 語学に能力がない, and is commented on by what follows 訳, in this case a simple negation, followed by an explicit correction as to the assumed why for failing language course.

7.3.13. Likening something to something else, using 様(よう)

The most common translation for よう is "like" in the "likening" meaning of the word. In this way, よう is used adverbially when a thing or action is likened to another, similar, thing or action, nominalising sentences in 連体形:

> 教科書(きょうかしょ)を持(も)ってくるように言(い)って下(くだ)さい。
> Please tell [her] to bring [her] textbook.

Literally, よう in this sentence turns 教科書を持ってくる, "to bring [along] [one's] textbook", into a way some action may be performed, and then likens the act of "saying" to this particular way, thus creating the (somewhat more-word translated) statement "please tell her in such a way as to effect her bringing along her textbook".

よう can also be used adverbially in combination with する to create a construction similar to "try to ...":

> 授業(じゅぎょう)に出(で)るようにする。
> To try to make it class.

In this sentence, the act of する, doing, is likened to the act of 授業に出る, to attend class. This in effect creates the phrase "To do in a manner that is like going to class" which is interpreted as "trying to go to class".

Aside from nominalising verb phrases, よう is also used as manner-conceptualiser in conjunction with の, in the pattern [...]のよう as follows:

伝言(でんごん)は次(つぎ)のように書(か)いてある。
The message reads as follows.

Literally this sentence turns the very short noun clause 次, "next/following", into the manner 次のよう, "as follows", "like what follows", and likens 書いてある, "being written [by someone]" to this "following" manner.

7.3.14. Indicating an exact manner using まま

Unlike よう, まま actually specifies an exact manner in which actions take place. まま takes a clause and specifies that what follows occurs in the exact same fashion. This can be done for noun phrases as follows:

そのまま続(つづ)いて下(くだ)さい。
Please continue like that.

Or it can be applied to 連体形 verb phrases:

行(い)くか留(とど)まるか彼(かれ)の決(き)めるままにさせよう。
[We]'ll let him go or stay according as he decides.

In this sentence, 決める, "to decide" is turned into an exact way, and linked to "him" (彼), to create "the way he decides [upon]", 彼の決めるまま. Note that while 決まる is a verb, 決めるまま is, by the very role of まま as nominaliser, a noun phrase, and thus can be used in a genitive の linking.

帽子(ぼうし)をかぶったままで教室(きょうしつ)に入(はい)るべきじゃない。
[One] shouldn't enter the classroom while wearing [their] hat/cap.

The literal (though rather ungrammatical) translation of this sentence would be "in the manner of wearing one's cap, it is not the social thing to enter a classroom".

7.3.15. Stating purpose using 為(ため)

When stating the purpose of a particular action, ため is used. This nominaliser takes a clause and links it up to a verb in the pattern [clause](の)ために[verb], where の is used if the clause is a noun clause, and is omitted when it's a verb clause:

卒業(そつぎょう) するために 一生懸命(いっしょうけんめい) 勉強(べんきょう) します。
[I] give studying [my] all so that [I] will graduate.

In this sentence the purpose of 勉強する (to study) is 卒業する (to graduate). Another translation would be "in order to graduate, I give it my all at studying", but the concept of purpose is the same in bother translations. When using a noun, typically a concept noun is nominalised into a purpose using ため:

愛(あい)のために何(なん)でもする。
[I] will do anything for love.

In this sentence the purpose of する is the noun 愛, giving rise to the obvious translation.

7.4. Counters

As mentioned in the outline of Japanese, counting in Japanese is everything but apparent or easy if you're used to western counting. To count in Japanese, two things are required: a number, as well as a categorical marker that indicates what is actually being counted. This makes counting in Japanese not just a matter of knowing which words stand for which numbers, but also which counters stand for which countable categories. As also mentioned in the outline, the categorical marker for items is usually not the item noun itself, but a different word acting as categorical counter particle. For instance, bottles, pencils and legs are all counted using the categorical counter for "long round object", and birds and rabbits are both counted using the categorical counter for "things with wings". In contrast to this, clock hours are counted using the specific counter for hours, and the number of times something happens is counted using the specific counter for occurrences.

The challenge is then to learn three things in order to successfully count in Japanese:

1. Which numbers exist and how to construct numbers yourself,
2. which specific and categorical counters exist, and
3. which to use when you don't actually know which you should use.

Just like for regular particles, there exist dictionaries that contain lists and lists of which word can be used as counter for which category of items, and if you wish to become a counting machine, it is recommended that you buy one and go over the lists in it as you will not find a truly exhaustive list here. Instead, the following list will only contain those counters that are considered reasonably essential to know to do basic counting with (and that's already quite a few).

7.4.1. Counting

Before we look at the counter particles, let's briefly look at counting itself. In the outline on Japanese I mentioned three different ways to count from one to ten, and this comes from the fact that Japan, while it borrowed the Chinese kanji and readings, also had its own language prior to knowing anything about China. Not surprisingly then, in pre-China Japan counting was done with completely different words. However, unlike this pre-China native Japanese counting system, the Chinese derived series for one through ten is reasonably simple:

1 一(いち), or 壱 in formal writing.
2 二(に), or 弐 in formal writing.
3 三(さん), or 参 in formal writing.
4 四(し) - in the "normal" counting series, this number can be pronounced よん, a native Japanese reading.
5 五(ご)
6 六(ろく)
7 七(しち) - like for four, in the "normal" counting series this number can be pronounced なな, also a native Japanese reading
8 八(はち)
9 九(きゅう)
10 十(じゅう), or 拾 in formal writing.

The reason why 1, 2, 3 and 10 have special formal kanji stems from the use in legal documents, where changing an 一 into a 十 was rather easy, while turning an 壱 into a 拾 was a lot harder. There are similar counter parts for 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, but there are essentially never used: 伍, 陸, 漆, 捌 and 玖.

Larger numbers in the Chinese system are written rather simply either in Arabic numerals (like 1890298345), or when they're decently clean or small enough to write out in full, written in kanji, using the following ordering system:

20 = 2 * 10: 二十
90 = 9 * 10: 九十
100 = 百(ひゃく), or 佰 in formal writing.

120 = 100 + 2 * 10: 百二十
780 = 7 * 100 + 8 * 10: 七百八十
1000 = 千(せん), or 阡 in formal writing.

1300 = 1000 + 3 * 100 = 千三百
4826 = 4 * 1000 + 8 * 100 + 2 * 10 + 6 = 四千八百二十六
10000 = 万(まん), or 萬 in formal writing.

Notice that this system of counting is actually reasonably close to the western system, except that instead of replacing the order (the "1" in 1, 10, 100, 1000, etc) with the factor ("2" in 20, "8" in 800, etc), the factor is added in front of the order, acting like a multiplier.

However, where the western systems raise by a power of 1000 for large numbers (a thousand, a million, a milliard, a billion, etc.), in the Chinese system large numbers are raised by powers of 万, 10,000.:

- 10000 is 万
- The last number that still uses 万 as order is 九千九百九十九万九千九百九十九.
- The number that follows this is a number equal to 万 times 万, which is 億(おく).
- The next order number is 万 * 億, which is 兆(ちょう).
- The next order number is 万 * 兆, which is 京(けい)

And so forth and so forth... though it must be said that this results in absurdly long numbers that no one in their right mind would use.

Aside from one through ten, zero is also a "number" in Japanese, and is typically written in katakana as ゼロ when used on its own, or using the noun 零(れい), meaning "naught" or "null", when it is used in things like "0.0001" (which can be written 零点零零零一(れいてんれいれいれいいち), where 点, means "dot").

The native Japanese way of counting is a bit more complex:

1	ひ	6	む
2	ふ	7	な
3	み	8	や
4	よ	9	こ
5	い(っ)	10	と

While this is the basic series, this is also something you will next to never, ever use, as they aren't actually used for anything other than counting without counters (for instance when you're counting on your fingers). Instead, there are two slightly different versions based on these native readings which are used for two common counts: general counting of items, and the counting of days:

	counting things in general using つ	*counting days using 日 (pronounced か)*
1	一(ひと)つ	一日(ついたち・いちにち)
2	二(ふた)つ	二日(ふつか)
3	三(みっ)つ	三日(みっか)
4	四(よっ)つ	四日(よっか)
5	五(いつ)つ	五日(いつか)
6	六(むっ)つ	六日(むいか)
7	七(なな)つ	七日(なのか)
8	八(やっ)つ	八日(ようか)
9	九(ここの) つ	九日(ここのか)
10	十(とお)	十日(とおか)

In the second column, the difference between ついたち and いちにち is that the first means "first day of the month", and the second "one day". For the other nine, the count means both "xth day of the month" as well as "x days". For counting days, the numbers 14, 20 and 24 are also special, but we will look at this in more detail in the counter particles list for the counter 日.

Before we move on to this list, we also need to look at one thing that will be of importance when combining numbers with counting particles: contractions. Depending on the pronunciation of the counter particle use, the number in front of it changes pronunciation, and there are a few general rules of contraction that apply, though of course as always there are a few exceptions to these general rules (when a counter has a different contraction scheme, this will be highlighted in the counter list).

7.4.1.1. Rules for 一(いち)

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the か-, さ- or た-column, いち becomes いっ:

いち + こ becomes いっこ
いち + さい becomes いっさい
いち + とう becomes いっとう

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the は-column, いち becomes いっ and the counter voices to a 'p' sound:

いち + はい becomes いっぱい

7.4.1.2. Rules for 三(さん)

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the は-column, the counter voices to a 'b' sound:

さん + ほん becomes さんぼん

7.4.1.3. Rules for 六(ろく)

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the か-column, ろく becomes ろっ:

ろく + かい becomes ろっかい

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the は-column, ろく becomes ろっ and the counter voices to a 'p' sound:

ろく + ひゃく becomes ろっぴゃく

7.4.1.4. Rules for 八(はち)

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the か-, さ- or た-column, はち becomes はっ:

はち + こう becomes はっこう
はち + せん becomes はっせん
はち + たい becomes はったい

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the は-column, はち becomes はっ and the counter voices to a 'p' sound:

はち + ひき becomes はっぴき

7.4.1.5. Rules for 十(じゅう)

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the か-, さ- or た-column, じゅう may become じっ or じゅっ:

じゅう + こ can become either じっこ or じゅっこ
じゅう + さい can become either じっさい or じゅっさい
じゅう + たい can become either じったい or じゅったい

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the は-column, じゅう can become either じっ or じゅっ and the counter voices to a 'p' sound:

じゅう + ほん can become either じっぽん or じゅっぽん

7.4.1.6. Rules for 何(なん)

When followed by a counter starting with a syllable from the は-column, the counter voices to a 'b' sound:

なん + はい becomes なんばい

7.4.2. Counter particles

As mentioned, counters can be split into specific and general counter categories. Specific counters are for instance unit counters such as for time or distance, and general counters are used for categorical items such as 'bound objects' or 'pieces of [something]'. Rather than just using these two categories, the following list of counters is a short list of order numbers that act as counters, followed by a set of counters split up into four categories: general article counters, counters for living things, counters for occurrences and time related unit counters. Also included at the end is a list of adverbs for quantification, which aren't counters of themselves but are used frequently in the context of counting.

7.4.2.1. Numerical counters

7.4.2.1.1. 百(ひゃく) - 100 (a hundred)

As mentioned in the section on counting, the orders in Japanese are technically counters too, with their own set of pronunciations:

百	(一百)	二百	三百	四百	五百
ひゃく	(いっぴゃく)	にひゃく	さんびゃく	よんひゃく	ごひゃく

六百	七百	八百	九百	千	何百
ろっぴゃく	ななひゃく	はっぴゃく	きゅうひゃく	せん	なんびゃく

Note that 一百 isn't used unless it needs to be stressed that it's one hundred, rather than some other factor of a hundred. Also note that quite obviously "ten hundred" doesn't exist. Instead this is 千, 1000.

7.4.2.1.2. 千(せん) - 1000 (a thousand)

The counter for a thousand has an irregular pronunciation for three and the question counter:

千	(一千)	二千	三千	四千	五千
せん	(いっせん)	にせん	さんぜん	よんせん	ごせん

六千	七千	八千	九千	万	何千
ろくせん	ななせん	はっせん	きゅうせん	まん	なんぜん

Again, unless the factor 1 needs to be stressed, 千 rather than 一千 is used. And again, there is no "ten thousand", there is the counter 万 instead.

7.4.2.1.3. 万(まん) - 10000 (ten thousand)

The highest "low order" order counter, 万 stands for ten thousand. Because it is the highest "low order" order counter, it is used in combination with 10, 100 and 1000 in to indicate a hundred thousand, a million and ten million respectively. 100 million is a new counter, 億(おく).

万	(一万)	二万	三万	四万	五万	六万	七万
まん	(いちまん)	にまん	さんまん	よんまん	ごまん	ろくまん	ななまん

八万	九万	十万	百万	千万	何万
はちまん	きゅうまん	じゅうまん	ひゃくまん	せんまん	なんまん

7.4.2.1.4. 億(おく) - 100000000 (a hundred million)

The biggest "useful" number, 億 is still a realistically large number in for instance prices for houses, luxury yachts or fancy sports cars. The pronunciation is wholly unremarkable:

億	(一億)	二億	三億	四億	五億	六億
おく	(いちおく)	におく	さんおく	よんおく	ごおく	ろくおく

七億	八億	九億	十億	百億	千億
ななおく	はちおく	きゅうおく	じゅうおく	ひゃくおき	せんおく

万億	何億
まんおかう	なんおく

7.4.2.1.5. other order counters

While slightly ridiculous, there are counters for 10 to the power minus 23, which is the truly insignificant number 0.00000000000000000000001 up to the incredibly huge number 10 to the power 68, or 100,000,000,000

The measures for Mega (M), Giga (G), Peta (P) and Exa (E) are missing from this set because of the fact that these correspond to 10 to the powers 6, 9, 15 and 18 respectively, none of which are divisible by 4.

7.4.2.2. General counters for articles

7.4.2.2.1. 本(ほん) - Long cylindrical items

When you want to count cylindrical objects like pencils, bottles or arms, 本 is used. As a noun this word means "book" or "origin", but as counter it obviously means something completely different.

The pronunciations for this counter are:

一本	二本	三本	四本	五本	六本
いっぽん	にほん	さんぼん	よんほん	ごほん	ろっぽん

七本	八本	九本	十本	何本
ななほん	はっぽん	きゅうほん	じっぽん	なんぼん
			じゅっぽん	

An example of its use is for instance in counting bottles of cola on the table:

何本ありますか。
How many bottles are there?

テーブルの上(うえ)にコーラが三本あります。
There are 3 bottles of cola on the table.

Interestingly, phone calls are also counted using this counter, the "logic" behind this being that telephone horns used to also be cylindrical.

7.4.2.2.2. 冊(さつ) - Bound volumes

This counter is used for counting bound objects like books, magazines, notebooks and the like. The pronunciations are:

一冊	二冊	三冊	四冊	五冊	六冊
いっさつ	にさつ	さんさつ	よんさつ	ごさつ	ろくさつ

七冊	八冊	九冊	十冊	何冊
ななさつ	はっさつ	きゅうさつ	じっさつ	なんさつ
			じゅっさつ	

And an example of use would be:

本棚(ほんだな)に五冊の本(ほん)があります。
There are 5 books on the bookshelf.

(In this sentence 本 is used as a normal noun, not a counter.)

7.4.2.2.3. 枚(まい) - Sheets

This counter is used to count sheet like thing, such as sheets of paper, plates, planks, or even things like folded up T-shirts. The pronunciations are:

一枚	二枚	三枚	四枚	五枚	六枚
いちまい	にまい	さんまい	よんまい	ごまい	ろくまい

七枚	八枚	九枚	十枚	何枚
しちまい	はちまい	きゅうまい	じゅうまい	なんまい
(ななまい)				

And an example of use would be:

この大(おお)きな本(ほん)は何枚ですか。
How many pages [lit: sheets] is this big book?

7.4.2.2.4. 杯(はい) - Cups

This counter is used to count cups of drink, such as glasses of wine, cups of tea, glasses of beer and the like. The pronunciations are:

一杯	二杯	三杯	四杯	五杯	六杯
いっぱい	にはい	さんばい	よんはい	ごはい	ろっぱい

七杯	八杯	九杯	十杯	何杯
ななはい	はっぱい	きゅうはい	じっぱい	なんばい
(しちはい)			じゅっぱい	

An example of use would be:

赤(あか)ワインを二杯とビールを一杯下(くだ)さい。
2 glasses of red wine and 1 glass of beer please.

Note that 一杯 can mean two things: as a counter statement, it means "one cup [of something]". However, it can also be used as a quantifier, in which case it

means "plenty" or "full", depending on the context. When used to mean "one cup", the pronunciation drops in pitch on っぱい, whereas when it is used to mean "full", the pronunciation has a rising pitch on っぱい.

7.4.2.2.5. 台(だい) - Machinery

This counter is used to count mechanical or electrical machinery of all sizes. This would include things like cars, televisions, pianos, cameras, sewing machines, and the like.

一台	二台	三台	四台	五台	六台
いちだい	にだい	さんだい	よんだい	ごだい	ろくだい

七台	八台	九台	十台	何台
ななだい	はちだい	きゅうだい	じゅうだい	なんだい
(しちだい)				

An example of use would be:

友達(ともだち)のヒロシは三台のコンピューターがあるんだって。
[My] friend Hiroshi said he had three computers.

7.4.2.2.6. 階(かい) - Floors in a building

This counter is used to count floors or levels of a building, and has a special pronunciation for 3:

一階	二階	三階	四階	五階	六階
いっかい	にかい	さんがい	よんかい	ごかい	ろっかい

七階	八階	九階	十階	何階
ななかい	はっかい	きゅうかい	じっかい	なんかい
			じゅっかい	

An example of use would be:

寝室(しんしつ)は二階にあります。
The bedrooms are on the second floor.

For floors underground 地下(ちか), literally meaning "underground", is prefixed to the count:

地下一階	地下二階	地下三階	..
ちかいっかい	ちかにかい	ちかさんがい	...

In addition, there are also two useful words to know when it comes to floors, being 最上階(さいじょうかい), meaning "top floor" and the 中二階(ちゅうにかい) meaning "mezzanine".

7.4.2.2.7. 個(こ) - Pieces

This is a general purpose counter used to count "pieces of [something]", such as the number of eggs needed for a specific recipe, or the number of bricks in a wall, or anything else that can be considered a piece of a whole. The pronunciations are:

一個	二個	三個	四個	五個	六個
いっこ	にこ	さんこ	よんこ	ごこ	ろっこ

七個	八個	九個	十個	何個
ななこ	はっこ	きゅうこ	じっこ	なんこ
			じゅっこ	

And example of use would be:

卵(たまご)を何個入(い)れていいですか。
How many eggs should [I] add?

7.4.2.2.8. つ - Items

This is a special general counter for counting items. Because this counter creates statements such as "I will have four [items]", it's typically not translated as it doesn't indicate what kind of items are counted at all, merely that they are being counted. The pronunciations for this counter, as mentioned in the counting section, are what make this particle special, since it uses the native Japanese pronunciations for 1-9, and has a special question word:

一つ	二つ	三つ	四つ	五つ
ひとつ	ふたつ	みっつ	よっつ	いつつ

六つ	七つ	八つ	九つ	幾つ
むっつ	ななつ	やっつ	ここのつ	いくつ

There are two things to note: firstly, 十 doesn't actually have つ as counter at all, and secondly there is a special question word いくつ instead of なん + つ. It deserves to be mentioned that this question word can also be used to ask "how many years [of age]" for young children. For children over nine/ten, the regular question word なんさい (何才 / 何歳) is used instead.

An example of use would be:

> 二つのオレンジが残(のこ)りました。
> There were 2 oranges left.

It should also be noted that this counter can only be used for counts from 1 through 10. Higher counting is not possible.

7.4.2.2.9. 円(えん) - The Japanese currency

This counter is used for ￥, the Japanese currency. This counter has special pronunciations for 4 and 9, and also has a special question word:

一円	二円	三円	四円	五円	六円
いちえん	にえん	さんえん	よえん	ごえん	ろくえん

七円	八円	九円	十円	幾ら
しちえん	はちえん	くえん	じゅうえん	いくら
(ななえん)		(きゅうえん)		

An example sentence would be:

> このペンは五十円でした。
> This pen was 50 yen.

Note the different readings よえん instead of "よんえん" and くえん instead of "きゅうえん". Also note that the question word for "how many yen" is actually the question word meaning "how much", a word that can be used to mean three things (like くらい): quantity, duration and frequency.

Thus, the question いくら読(よ)みますか, "how much do you read", can mean three different things, reflected in the possible answers to it:

> 二週間(にしゅうかん)に一冊(いっさつ)読みます。
> [I] read 1 book every 2 weeks.

> 一日(いちにち)に二時間(にじかん)読みます。
> [I] read 2 hours a day.

あんまり読ませんよ。
Oh, [I] don't really read that much.

Other major currency counters are ドラ, the dollar, ユーロ, the euro and パウンド, the pound.

7.4.2.3. Counters for living things

7.4.2.3.1. 匹(ひき) - Small animals and fish

This counter is used to count small animals like domesticated cats, squirrels or mice, as well as fish. The pronunciations are:

一匹	二匹	三匹	四匹	五匹	六匹
いっぴき	にひき	さんびき	よんひき	ごひき	ろっぴき

七匹	八匹	九匹	十匹	何匹
しちひき	はっぴき	きゅうひき	じゅうひき	なんびき
(ななひき)				

An example sentence would be:

ねずみ一匹でも入(はい)れないはずです。
Not even a single mouse should be able to get in [here].

7.4.2.3.2. 羽(わ) - Birds and rabbits

This kanji means "wings" when pronounced はね, and as counter is used to count birds. As a peculiarity, this counter can also be used to count rabbits (tough 匹 is more common these days), because of an interesting bit of Japanese history: from the 6th century until the mid-19th century, Japanese people were forbidden to eat meat. However, this applied only to mammalian meat, and birds and fish could still be eaten. In order to be able to eat meat anyway, people started calling certain animals by different names, refering to them as birds of fish, and rabbits became referred to as birds, which is why it simply had to be counted with 羽 until 1872, when the meiji restoration embraced the Western ways and eating meat was allowed again after a more than 1300 year period of abstinence.

The pronunciations for this counter are wholly unremarkable:

一羽	二羽	三羽	四羽	五羽	六羽
いちわ	にわ	さんわ	よんわ	ごわ	ろくわ

七羽	八羽	九羽	十羽	何羽
しちわ	はちわ	きゅうわ	じゅうわ	なんわ
(ななわ)				

A fun example sentence for this counter is a classic confusing sentence:

庭には二羽鶏がいる。
There are 2 chickens in the garden.

The pronunciation for this sentence is "にわにわにわにわとりがいる", which is always a good reason to use this sentence whenever appropriately possible.

7.4.2.3.3. 頭(とう) - Large animals

This kanji on its own means "head", and for reasons about as inexplicable as why 本 is for used for cylindrical objects, 頭 is used to count large animals such as sheep, cows, horses, elephants, giraffes, crocodiles, etc. The pronunciations are:

一頭	二頭	三頭	四頭	五頭	六頭
いっとう	にとう	さんとう	よんとう	ごとう	ろくとう

七頭	八頭	九頭	十頭	何頭
ななとう	はっとう	きゅうとう	じっとう	なんとう

An example sentence would be:

一頭(うま)の馬が見(み)えます。
[I] can see 1 horse.

7.4.2.3.4. 人(にん) - People

It should be noted that there are special pronunciations for 1 person and 2 people, using the reading り, but that 3 and up is all counted using the pronunciation にん:

一人	二人	三人	四人	五人	六人	七人	八人
ひとり	ふたり	さんにん	よにん	ごにん	ろくにん	しちにん	はちにん

九人	十人	十一人	十二人	何人
きゅうにん	じゅうにん	じゅういちにん	じゅうににん	なんにん

An example sentence would be:

> あの二人は夫婦(ふうふ)ですか。
> Are those two (people) over there a (married) couple?

The polite counter for people, as used by for instance waiters or receptionists, is 名(めい), with the very polite counter being 名様(めいさま). Don't use these counters yourself unless you find yourself serving people at some point. For normal counting of people, stick with 人.

7.4.2.4. Occurrences and ranking

7.4.2.4.1. 度(ど) - Number of times, degrees

This counter is principally used only for counting once, twice and thrice. For something that occurs more than three times, 回(かい) is used instead. Aside from being used for occurrence, 度 is also used to count degrees Celsius, and geometric degrees (like a 90 degree angle). The pronunciations are:

一度	二度	三度	四度	五度	六度
いちど	にど	さんど	よんど	ごど	ろくど

七度	八度	九度	十度	何度
しちど	はちど	きゅうど	じゅうど	なんど

Example sentences would be:

> もう一度言(い)って下(くだ)さいませんか。
> Could you please say that one more time?

> 今日(きょう)は暑(あつ)いねえ。何度でしょう。
> It's hot today, don't you think? I wonder what temperature (lit: how many degrees) it is.

As you may remember from the nominaliser list, this particle is also a nominaliser that turns clauses into occurrences, in which case it's pronounced たび.

7.4.2.4.2. 回(かい) - Number of times

Where 度 is used for once, twice and thrice, 回 can be used for any number of occurrences. The pronunciations are:

一回	二回	三回	四回	五回
いっかい	にかい	さんかい	よんかい	ごかい

六回	七回	八回	九回	十回	何回
ろっかい	しちかい	はっかい	きゅうかい	じゅうかい	なんかい
	(ななかい)				

An example sentence would be:

もう三回してみちゃったよ。
[I] already tried (and failed) three times...

7.4.2.4.3. 番(ばん) - Rank

This counter is used to indicate a number in a ranking. This counter has a different pronunciation for 9, so the pronunciations are:

一番	二番	三番	四番	五番	六番
いちばん	にばん	さんばん	よんばん	ごばん	ろくばん

七番	八番	九番	十番	何番
ななばん	はちばん	くばん	じゅうばん	なんばん
		(きゅうばん)		

An example sentence would be:

私(わたし)は三番です。
I'm [up] third.

The first count in this series, 一番, is the same 一番 that is used in the adjectival superlative in Japanese, since it literally means "first" and thus also means "most".

7.4.2.4.4. 号(ごう) - Issue number

This counter is used to count issues such as newspapers, or number in a series such as room number on a floor, or say the number of a limited series prototype car. Like 番, it has a different pronunciation for 9, so the pronunciations are:

一号	二号	三号	四号	五号	六号
いちごう	にごう	さんごう	よんごう	ごごう	ろくごう

七号	八号	九号	十号	何号
しちごう	はちごう	くごう	じゅうごう	なんごう
		(きゅうごう)		

An example sentence would be:

両親(りょうしん)は十七号に住(す)んでいます。
My parents live at number seventeen.

The combination of the preceding counter and this one, 番号(ばんごう) is used to indicate a ranked "number", such as a phone number, registration number or product serial number, where the number doesn't particularly indicate a rank on its own, but does sit at a particular position in the greater list of all numbers of its category.

7.4.2.4.5. 目(め) - Cardinality

This is technically not a counter, but can be added to rank counters to indicate cardinality. For instance, it can be used in combination with 番 to create the counter 番目(ばんめ), which indicates not just a rank, but also indicates that it's a rank in a list of sorts:

この停留所(ていりゅうじょ)から５番目のバスに乗(の)って下(くだ)さい。
Please take the no. 5 bus at this bus stop.

This sentence is different from using just 番 by this implied 'being part of a list':

この停留所から５番のバスに乗って下さい。
Please take the fifth bus at this bus stop.

If the fifth bus to come by is actually the no. 14, then we're in trouble. This is why 目 is quite important to know.

7.4.2.5. Counting time related units

7.4.2.5.1. 秒(びょう) - seconds

Counting seconds in Japanese uses 秒, for which the pronunciations are:

一秒	二秒	三秒	四秒	五秒	六秒
いちびょう	にびょう	さんびょう	よんびょう	ごびょう	ろくびょう

七秒	八秒	九秒	十秒	何秒
ななびょう	はちびょう	くびょう	じゅうびょう	なんびょう
		(きゅうびょう)		

An example sentence would be:

何秒(はんぷん)かかりますか。二十秒か、半分か。
How long will it take? 20 seconds, half a minute?

7.4.2.5.2. 分(ふん) - Minutes

Going one step above seconds, we find minutes. The minutes series has changed pronunciations for three, four and the question word, with the pronunciations being:

一分	二分	三分	四分	五分	六分
いっぷん	にふん	さんぷん	よんぶん	ごふん	ろっぷん

七分	八分	九分	十分	何分
ななふ	はっぷん	きゅうふん	じっぷん	なんぷん
			じゅっぷん	

Also, the measure "half minute", as used in the previous example sentence is 半分, はんぷん, using the same pronunciation as for 三 and 何.

An example sentence would be:

今(いま)三時(さんじ)五分前(まえ)です。
It's now 5 minutes to 3.

7.4.2.5.3. 時(じ) - Clock hours

Don't confuse clock hours with durational hours. Clock hours are things like "three o' clock" and "seven in the evening". Durational hours are "it took 3 hours" or "I went home after waiting an hour". This counter is for the first category and indicates the hours of the day:

一時	二時	三時	四時	五時	六時	七時
いちじ	にじ	さんじ	よじ	ごじ	ろくじ	しちじ

八時	九時	十時	十一時	十二時	何時
はちじ	くじ	じゅうじ	じゅういちじ	じゅうにじ	なんじ

Note the pronunciations for 四時 and 九時, both being the short pronunciations.

An example sentence would be:

何時ですか。
What time is it?

The indicators for a.m. and p.m. are 午前(ごぜん) and 午後(ごご) in Japanese, indicating whether a time is before or after the "hour of the horse", which corresponds to the period from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. according to the classical Chinese system. To make the list complete, 正午(しょうご) means mid-day and 零時(れいじ) means midnight.

7.4.2.5.4. 時間(じかん) - Durational hours

By adding the durational particle 間(かん) to the counter 時, we get the durational counter for hours. The difference between clock time and duration is striking:

何時ですか。
What time is it?

何時間ですか。
How long will it be/take?

This difference is also very important for actual counting statements; quite often people starting on Japanese will mix up when to use 時 and when to use 時間, creating sentences such as the following:

三時間です。
It's three hours long.

While they really mean to say 三時です, "it's 3 o' clock". Similarly, they might say:

二時 勉強(べんきょう) しました。
[I] studied at 2 o' clock.

while meaning to say 二時間勉強しました, "I studied for two hours"

7.4.2.5.5. 日(か) / 日(にち) - Days

Stepping up again, we reach days, which as explained before is a special series in more than on way. Firstly, counting days of 1-10 uses the counter 日 in its pronunciation か, paired with native Japanese readings for the numbers. 14 and 24, too, use 日 pronounced か, but a mixed Chinese/Japanese reading for the number, and "20 days" has its own special word. The rest of the days are then counted using 日 in its pronunciation にち:

一日	二日	三日	四日	五日	六日	七日
ついたち	ふつか	みっか	よっか	いつか	むいか	なのか

八日	九日	十日	十一日	十二日	十三日
ようか	ここのか	とおか	じゅういちにち	...にち	...にち

十四日	十五日	十六日	十七日	十八日	十九日
じゅうよっか	...にち	...にち	...にち	...にち	....にち

二十日	二十一日	二十二日	二十三日	二十四日	二十五日
はつか	...にち	...にち	...にち	にじゅうよっか	...にち

二十六日	二十七日	二十八日	二十九日	三十日	三十一日
...にち	...にち	...にち	...にち	...にち	...にち

The reading for 一日 differs depending on what it's used to mean: ついたち refers to the first day of the month, while いちにち refers to a single day in duration. For every other number under 32, 日 refers to both day of the month and length of duration in days. Any number above 31 automatically only means "days of duration", since months only go up to the 31st at best. Because of this, 34, 44, etc have the pronunciation ～よ(ん)にち instead of ～よっか.

An example sentence would be:

二日(ふつか)一泊(いっぱく)泊(と)まった。
[We] stayed 2 days and one night.

In this sentence a counter that won't be treated separately, 泊(はく), is used which means "nights of stay".

The question word for dates can be either いつ, meaning "when", or the question word 何日(なんにち). To ask about length of duration in days, the question statement どのぐらい for approximate duration and 何日 for exact duration can be used.

Aside from being able to count days, it's also good to be able to name the immediate past and future days:

一昨昨日（さきおととい）	three days ago (2 days before yesterday)
一昨日（おととい）	day before yesterday
昨日（きのう）	yesterday
今日（きょう）	today
本日（ほんじつ）	"the day in question"
明日（あした・あす）	tomorrow
明後日（あさって）	day after tomorrow
明々後日（しあさって）	in three days (2 days after tomorrow)

7.4.2.5.6. 週（しゅう） - Weeks

Upping the length once more, we reach weeks, indicated with 週. Like 時, 週 on its own just refers to the yearly week, with 週間 referring to length of duration as measured in weeks. The pronunciations are:

一週	二週	三週	四週	五週	六週
いっしゅう	にしゅう	さんしゅう	よんしゅう	ごしゅう	ろくしゅう

七週	八週	九週	十週	何週
ななしゅう	はちしゅう	きゅうしゅう	じゅうしゅう	なんしゅう

An example sentence would be:

今年（ことし）の祭（まつ）りは十八週です。
This year's festival is in week 18.

The words for the immediate past and future weeks are:

先先週（せんせんしゅう）	the week before last
先週（せんしゅう）	last week
今週（こんしゅう）	this week
来週（らいしゅう）	next week
再来週（さらいしゅう）	the week after next

7.4.2.5.7. 週間 (しゅうかん) - Weeks of duration

Like 時, 週 has to be followed by 間 to turn it into a durational counter:

試験(しけん)はおよそ二週間です。
The exams are in about two weeks.

7.4.2.5.8. がつ (月) - Months

Like 時 and 週, 月 alone refers to month of the year. While western languages typically have names for their months, the Japanese not too long ago gave up on named months in favour of the Chinese system of numbered months, resulting in:

一月	二月	三月	四月	五月	六月	七月
いちがつ	にがつ	さんがつ	しがつ	ごがつ	ろくがつ	しちがつ
January	February	March	April	May	June	July

八月	九月	十月	十一月	十二月
はちがつ	くがつ	じゅうがつ	じゅういちがつ	じゅうにがつ
August	September	October	November	December

The names of the months have been added here to stress that these are not so much numbered months, but calendar months. Remember them as such! Also note that there are specific readings for April, July and September. You can't use another reading for the number for these words - these "counts" are very much fixed in the Japanese language as nouns. The question word for which month of the year it is, is 何月(なんがつ).

The words for the immediate past and future months are:

先先月(せんせんげつ) the month before last
先月(せんげつ) last month
今月(こんげつ) this month
来月(らいげつ) next month
再来月(さらいげつ) the month after next

7.4.2.5.9. 月 (つき) - Months of duration

When read as つき, and paired with the native Japanese readings for numbers, this counter expresses "moons", i.e., duration in terms of almost-months, and is

typically only used for indicating 1 to 3 months of duration. This is a slightly poetic counter, but is also used in formal writing to indicate the 1-3 month durational range:

一月	二月	三月
ひとつき	ふたつき	みつき

7.4.2.5.10. ヶ月(かげつ) - Months of duration

While - like 時 and 週 - 月 on its own means "month of the year", the suffix 間 cannot be used to turn 月 into a durational counter. Instead, the prefix ヶ is used, but be careful: this is not the katakana ケ, but actually a simplified kanji form of 箇. You can tell this difference by looking at the size of the kanji: ヶ月 (かげつ) vs. ケ月 - the katakana ケ is much bigger than the simplified version of 箇. Why exactly this kanji got simplified to this deceptive form is not entirely clear, but it has, which means you'll need to be able to recognise it as a counter.

The standard contractions occur in the pronunciations:

一ヶ月	二ヶ月	三ヶ月	四ヶ月	五ヶ月	六ヶ月
いっかげつ	にかげつ	さんかげつ	よんかげつ	ごかげつ	ろっかげつ

七ヶ月	八ヶ月	九ヶ月	十ヶ月	何ヶ月
しちかげつ	はっかげつ	くかげつ	じっかげつ	なんかげつ
		きゅうかげつ	じゅっかげつ	

An example sentence would be:

三ヶ月に外国(がいこく)にいます。
I will be abroad for three months.

7.4.2.5.11. 年(ねん) - Years

Once more, there is the distinction between years in an era, 年, and years of duration, 年間. The pronunciations for 年 are:

一年	二年	三年	四年	五年	六年
いちねん	にねん	さんねん	よねん	ごねん	ろくねん

七年	八年	九年	十年	何年
しちねん	はちねん	くねん	じゅうねん	なんねん
		きゅうねん		

An example sentence would be:

二年生(にねんせい)です。
[I] am a 2nd year student.

In this sentence the counter used is actually 年生, which is the counter for scholar year. However, since the meaning is still year in an era (the scholar era in this case), it's still usable as example.

The words for the immediate past and future years use a slightly different pattern than we saw for weeks and months:

一昨昨年(さきおととし)	three years ago (2 years before last)
一昨年(おととし)	the year before last
去年(きょねん)	last year
今年(ことし)	this year
来年(らいねん)	next year
再来年(さらいねん)	the year after next

7.4.2.5.12. 年間(ねんかん) - Years of duration

Once more, adding 間 turns the counter into a durational counter:

三年間チャンピオンの座(ざ)を守(まも)った。
[He] kept with his title (lit: seating) as champion for three years.

7.4.2.5.13. 歳(さい) / 才(さい) - Years of age

The one thing 年 cannot be used for is to indicate years of age. For this, two special counters are used: 歳 and its simpler counterpart 才. While simpler, it's generally not a good idea to use it in every instance where writing age is required; because it is simpler, using it is a sign that you're not quite good enough at kanji yet to write the "real" kanji form. The pronunciations are the same as for any other さ-counter:

一歳	二歳	三歳	四歳	五歳	六歳
いっさい	にさい	さんさい	よんさい	ごさい	ろくさい

七歳	八歳	九歳	十歳	二十歳	何歳
ななさい	はっさい	きゅうさい	じっさい	はたち	なんさい
			じゅっさい		

The reading くさい for 九歳, while technically possible, should be avoided, since it sounds too much like 臭(くさ)い, meaning "smelly/stinky". Also note that there is a special word for twenty years of age, はたち, just like there is a special word for twenty days, はつか.

An example sentence would be:

父(とう)さんは明日(あした)六十一歳になります。
My father will turn 61 tomorrow.

7.4.3. Additional words for quantification

There are also several adverbs that are used to quantify without relying on numbers. Some of these quantifiers can only be used with verbs or verbal adjectives in positive or negative form, and whenever this is the case this will be explicitly mentioned. The list of adverbial quantifiers consists of:

7.4.3.1. いつも - Always/never

As mentioned in the particle section on も, this word doesn't mean two different things in Japanese, but only gets translated with two different words depending on whether it's followed by a positive or negative verb.

> いつもそんなことばっかり言(い)っている。
> [You]'re always saying the same thing.
> (lit: you're always saying only those kind of things)

> いつもしないのに、どうして分(わ)かるんですか。
> Why is it [you] know [how to do it] when [you] never do it [in the first place]?

7.4.3.2. 大抵(たいてい) - Usually, mostly

> たいてい七時(しちじ)に起(お)きます。
> [I] usually get up at 7.

7.4.3.3. よく - often

This quantifier only works when followed by a positive verb:

> よく泳(およ)ぎます。
> [I] often swim.

7.4.3.4. 余(あま)り, あんまり - Not often / not much

This adverb actually comes from the the 五段 verb 余る, meaning "to be left over", and is the counterpart to よく. It can only be used when followed by a negative verbs or verbal adjective:

紅茶(こうちゃ)はあんまり好(す)きじゃありません。
[I] don't like (red) tea very much.

There is no real difference between あまり and あんまり, but the latter sounds slightly more emphatic.

7.4.3.5. とても - Very

This quantifier only works when followed by a positive verbal adjective:

これはとても安(やす)いですね。
This is very cheap isn't it?

7.4.3.6. 時々(ときどき) - Sometimes

妹(いもうと) と 私(わたし) はときどき映画(えいが)を見(み)に行(い)きます。
My (younger) sister and I go to the movies from time to time.

7.4.3.7. 全然(ぜんぜん) - Not at all

Like あまり, this quantifier only works when followed by a negative verb or verbal adjective:

全然構(かま)いませんよ。
[I] don't mind at all.

7.4.3.8. 可(か)なり - Considerably, rather

Like とても, this quantifier only works when followed by positive verbals:

これはかなり高(たか)いんですね。
This is rather expensive, isn't it?

7.4.3.9. さっぱり - Not at all

Like あまり and ぜんぜん, this quantifier only works when followed by a negative verb:

これはさっぱり分(わ)かりません。
[I] don't understand this at all.

7.4.3.10. 少(すこ)し - A little while

This quantifier only works when followed by a positive verb:

> 少し待(ま)てばいいかな。
> Could [we] wait for just a bit?
> (lit: waiting for a little while is okay, isn't it?)

7.4.3.11. ちょっと - A little

This quantifier can be followed by either a positive verb or verbal adjective in normal statements, or by negative verbs and verbal adjectives when used in the form of a question. When used in a negative question, the full sentence actually connotes a positive, as can be seen in the following examples:

> ちょっと寒(さむ)くないですか。
> Isn't it a little cold?

> ちょっと歩(ある)きませんか。
> Shall [we] take a little walk?

Used with a positive there is nothing remarkable to note:

> これはちょっと高(たか)いですね。
> This is a bit expensive, don't you agree?

7.4.3.12. 一杯(いっぱい) - A lot

Mentioned in the counter section for 杯, this quantifier can only be used with positive verbs:

> あいにくですが、本日(ほんじつ)は予約(よやく)で一杯です。
> [I]'m sorry, but today is fully booked.

Remember that this is only a quantifier if pronounced with the っぱい part in raised pitch. If pronounced with the っぱい part in a lower pitch, it means "one cup [of something]".

7.4.3.13. もっと - Even more

Used as the comparative for adjectives, as well as comparative for verb actions, this quantifier can only be used with positive verbs and verbal adjectives:

> もっと頑張(がんば)らなくてはいけない。
> [I] need to put in [even] more effort.

This sentence is a positive verb due to the double negative used to imply an imperative (see the verb て section, as well as the particle section on ば).

7.4.3.14. ずっと - Very much (throughout)

This quantifier is only used with positive verbal adjectives:

> 彼女(かのじょ)はどんなモデルよりでもずっときれいだ。
> She's much prettier than any model.

7.4.3.15. 全部(ぜんぶ) - All

> お金(かね)をほとんど全部(ぜんぶ)使(つか)ってしまった。
> [I]'ve spent almost all my money.

7.4.3.16. 全(すべ)て - Everything

This quantifier is used only with positive verbs:

> 棚(だな)の上(うえ)の本(ほん)を全(すべ)て読(よ)んでしまった。
> [I]'ve read every book on [my] shelves.

7.5. Prepositions

Japanese doesn't have prepositions in the way a lot of western languages have prepositions. You've already seen that quite a few particles fulfil the role that prepositions plays in western languages, but this still leaves the question of how to say something in Japanese that in western languages uses prepositions that are not covered just by particles. For this reason, this final "particles" section will cover translating prepositions

There are two categories that preposition translations fall under. The first is the list of prepositions that have particle or verb construction counter parts, though since you have already encountered these in the previous sections, these will not be treated in detail. The other category is those prepositions that have conceptual temporal/location nouns as Japanese counter part. I say conceptual because some concepts that are multiple words in western languages are the same conceptual temporal/location noun in Japanese. These nouns will be treated in more detail and will, where needed, be accompanied by examples.

7.5.1. Prepositions translating to particles/verb constructions

as	This is done using the particle に in its role as indirect object
at	This is done using に or で, depending on whether it concerns a thing or an event.
by	This is done using に or で, depending on whether it concerns location or instrumentalis
despite	This is done using the particle のに
during	This is done with the 連用形 particles ながら or がてら for strict or loose simultaneous action
except/save	This is done using しか or ほか
for	This is done using either the indirect object に or the nominalising のために
from	This is done using either the indirect object に or から
of	This is done using の
off	This is done using a resultant state form of verbs that denote "to go off of"
since	This is done using から
through	This is done using で
to	This is done using に as indirect object, に as destination, or へ as direction
with	This is done using と
without	This is done with either a verb in 未然形+ず, or using (未然形) なくて/ないで

7.5.2. Prepositions translating to conceptual temporal/location nouns

The conceptual nouns used to stand for what in western languages is done using prepositions, can be used in the following pattern:

[X](の)[Y]に/で[Z]

where [X] can be any noun or verb clause, [Y] is a conceptual noun, and [Z] a verb activity or a state. The の in this pattern is enclosed in parentheses, because it can be omitted in some cases, but has to be used in others. Typically, when [X] is a noun clause, の is used, and when it is a verb clause, の is omitted, but there are exceptions to this, and each conceptual noun entry in the list below will show the pattern(s) it can be used in.

To illustrate this pattern before we move on the list itself, say we replace [X] with 駅(えき), station, [Y] with 前(まえ), before, and [Z] with 店(みせ)がある, "there is a store". Doing so, we get the following sentence:

駅の前に店がある。
station [genitive] before [location] there is a station

The natural translation, "There is a store in front of the station" follows readily from this pattern.

As a note, the choice of whether to use に or で is - as always - dependent on whether a location or an event is focused on. In the previous example a location was focused on, but if we were to use the same sentence but with [Z] being replaced with 友達(ともだち)と出会(であ)った, "[I] met [my] friend", then we get a sentence that can focus on the event "meeting", and this focus can be made explicit by using で instead of に:

駅の前で友達と出会った。
[I] met [my] friend in front of the station.

7.5.3. The conceptual nouns list

7.5.3.1. 上(うえ) - Above, up, upon, on

The kanji for this word already hints at the fact that this noun signifies a conceptual location 'above' something. It does not literally mean any of the words "above", "on", "up", "over" or the likes, but simply implies them all, given a specific context. For instance:

テーブルの上に美(うつく)しい生(い)け花(ばな)があります。
There is a beautiful flower arrangement on the table.

Since flower arrangements typically rest on a surface, 上 in this case means "on". However, if we look at the following sentence we see a different context, and a different meaning:

テーブルの上に窓(まど)があります。
There's a window above the table.

Since windows don't typically rest on surfaces but are part of walls, 上 can only be interpreted as meaning "above" in this context.

7.5.3.2. 下(した) - Below, beneath, under, underneath

In the same way that 上 means the conceptual location above something, 下 means a conceptual location below something. Again, context dictates what preposition is best used in the translation:

テーブルの下に猫(ねこ)がいます。
There's a cat underneath the table

テーブルの下に引(ひ)き出(だ)しがあります。
There are drawers under the table.

In the first sentence 下 refers to well under the table, on the floor, while in the second sentence 下 means on the underside of the table itself.

7.5.3.3. 前(まえ) - Before, in front of, prior

When referring to something before, or preceding, something else, the conceptual noun 前 is used. This can be used for both time and space:

駅(えき)の前で待(ま)ってました。
[I] waited in front of the station.

This example, similar to the one given in this section's pattern explanation, states something being in front of some location. If instead we want to indicate something as happening or being the case before some verb activity, then 前 follows the 連体形:

出(で)かける前に掃除(そうじ)をした。
[I] cleaned up before going out on errands.

In this sentence, the event "going out [on errands]", 出かける, indicates a particular time, even if it's not sharply defined like clock times.

7.5.3.4. 中 (ちゅう) - During

The conceptual noun 中 means several different things depending on its use, and has different pronunciations for each different use. When used directly after nouns that denote some activity, it is pronounced ちゅう, and is used to indicate that the verb action or verb state that follows it applies during the period that the activity noun describes. This may sound a bit abstract, so an example:

配達中(はいたつちゅう) です。
[I] am in the middle of a delivery

Clearly a delivery takes time to perform, and the 中 indicates that something is the case, or takes place, during this time.

7.5.3.5. 中 (じゅう) - Cross-...

When used for with location nouns, the meaning for 中 changes to "cross-..." such as "cross country" or "nation-wide", and the reading changes to じゅう, such as in for instance:

世界中(せかいじゅう)で人(ひと)が生(う)まれて死(し)ぬ。
The world over, people are born and people die.

7.5.3.6. 中 (なか) - Amid, among, amongst, in, inside, within

And finally, when used in the pattern that does not have の omitted, 中 is pronounced なか, and can mean a wide variety of things that are associated with being located inside something. When focusing on locations, に is used as the follow up particle, but when 中 refers to abstract concepts such as "amidst [a collection]" or "among [things]", it is followed by で instead, such as in for instance:

食(た)べ物(もの)の中で、和食(わしょく)が一番好(いちばんす)きです。
From [amongst] food, [I] like Japanese food best.

Here 中 refers to something being located inside a category. Since this is an abstract location, the particle で is used. However, when there is no abstract location but a real location, like the hollow of a tree, or the inside of a box, に is used:

箱(はこ)の中に腕時計(うでどけい)があった。
The box contained a watch.
(lit: There was a watch in the box)

The pattern [...]の中で[...] will be explained further in the constructions section, when dealing with open choices - something that quite obviously requires being able to indicate something as existing within a greater (abstract) collection.

7.5.3.7. 後(うし)ろ - Behind

The noun 後ろ is used to indicate that something is located behind something else. Be careful though: unlike 前, which corresponded to "before" both in the location and time sense, 後ろ only means "behind", and stands for a location; it cannot be used to mean "after". To indicate the concept of "after", a different noun (後) is used, which can be pronounced in three different ways, meaning three slightly different things.

An example of the use of 後ろ would be:

ねずみが冷蔵(れいぞう)の後ろに隠(かく)れてしまった。
The mice hid behind the refrigerator.

7.5.3.8. 後(あと), 後(ご), 後(のち) - After

When indicating something happens after a certain time or event, 後 is used. However, depending on whether this "after" refers to "occurring at some time after", or "occurring from then on" a different pronunciation is used; when one only wishes to indicate something will happen after some specific time or event, the reading for this noun is あと:

宿題(しゅくだい) は後(あと)でします。
[I]'ll do [my] homework afterwards.

In this sentence the act of "doing homework" will be done at some point after some contextually implied event, typically whatever the speaker is doing at the moment of saying a sentence like this.

On the other hand, when indicating that something will stay in effect after some specific time or event, the reading for this kanji is ご:

仕事(しごと)は 8時(じ)に終(お)わりその後(ご)は暇(ひま)だ。
[My] job ends at 8, after that [I]'ll be available.
(lit: "after that is leisure.")

Because the reading for the noun 後 is ご in this sentence, it clearly states that this person won't be free for just a while after 8 o' clock, but will be free from 8 o' clock onwards until some indeterminate time (being probably when they go to bed).

There is a third reading for 後, being のち, but this is a literary reading used as a replacement for あと, with as extra feature that it can be used to stand for "the afterlife"; the ultimate concept of "afterwards".

7.5.3.9. 外 (そと) - Out, outside

The opposite of 中, 外 stands for the broad and undefined location that is the world outside some container or other:

> うちの猫(ねこ)が家(いえ)の外に遊(あそ)んでる。
> Our cat's playing outside (lit: outside the house).

7.5.3.10. 間 (あいだ) - Between

Literally this noun stands for the concept of "in an interval", where this interval can be either temporal or spatial:

> 銀行(ぎんこう)と 郵便局(ゆうびんきょく) の間に公衆電話(こうしゅうでんわ)があります。
> There are public phones located between the bank and the post office.
> (lit: "in the interval [bank - post office]")

As can be seen from the example, the list of locations between which some verb action occurs, or some verb state is the case, is created using the standard inclusive noun listing particle と.

For time on the other hand, the [...]から[...]まで pattern is used, because this lets us specify an interval with an explicit beginning and end:

> 犯人(はんにん)は二時(にじ)から三時(さんじ)までの間に逃(に)げられた。
> The culprit [managed to] escape between 2 and 3 o' clock.

7.5.3.11. 近く (ちか) - Near

Used for locations only, this noun is used to indicate something is close to some location or object:

映画館(えいがかん)の近くにあります。
It's close to the movie theatre.

7.5.3.12. 向(む)こう - Facing, across, opposite, beyond

In Japanese the idea of "across", "opposite from" and "beyond" are all variations on the same theme of something facing something else: something opposite to us clearly faces us, something that is for instance across the street faces us from across the street and something that lies beyond the darkest night is something that faces us from this theoretical location:

道(みち)の向こうに友達(ともだち)が待(ま)ってるはずです。
[My] friends should be waiting for [me] across the street.
(lit: "I expect my friends to be waiting ...")

海(うみ)の向こうに別(べつ)の世界(せかい)があると聞(き)いた。
[I] heard that across the ocean lies a different world.

7.5.3.13. 辺(へん) - Near, around

The noun 辺 literally means "vicinity", and when used as a conceptual location noun, means "near", "close to", and the like:

お魚屋(さかなや)の辺に財布(さいふ)を無(な)くしちまった。
[I] lost [my] wallet somewhere near the fish shop.

7.5.3.14. 横(よこ) and 隣(となり) - Beside, next to

This word pair is (yet another) illustration of how Japanese conceptualises things differently from western languages. The words required to create what in western language is the prepositional construction "next to" are an excellent example of such a difference: while in most western languages when two objects are placed side by side, they are said to be "beside" or "next to" each other, Japanese requires you to pick the right word for this spatial relation depending on whether or not these two objects are of a similar category. For instance, placing two apples next to each other, or two bikes, means you can use the noun 隣(となり) to indicate that one is next to the other:

俺(おれ)の自転車(じてんしゃ)は 弟(おとうと) のやつの隣に立(た)っておきました。
I left my bike standing next to my (younger) brother's.

This is perfectly valid use of 隣, as the two objects in question are clearly of the same category.

However, for the following example we need to use 横(よこ) instead of 隣:

> みんなが池(いけ)の横に遊(あそ)んだりした。
> Everyone was play games and stuff next to the pond.
>
> (note that using に stresses the location rather than the act in this sentence)

Here, since みんな are of a category "people", and 池 is of category "pond", there is no way 隣 can be used, since these two things aren't even remotely alike. In effect, 隣 can be thought of as not just meaning "next to" but having the added meaning "next to the other [object category]", while 横 only means "beside" or "next to".

8. Constructions

We've looked at all the separate components that make Japanese work by now, dealing with each subject relatively on its own, only hinting at meaning by interaction through example sentences. However, most of the interesting things happen when we start using more complex mixed clauses to add some depth to our statements and questions. This section deals with those constructions, where the focus is not so much on single word classes and what they do, but on getting certain ideas across using proper Japanese. Things like choosing, being polite (or not), making suggestions and reasoning about things. All of these things and more will be treated in the next couple of sections.

8.1. Playing with numbers

We have looked at counting in the counter section of particles, but there is more you can do with numbers than just count. Two prominent things numbers are used for is for telling time, and for doing math. The latter is of course the most obvious, but the first is also quite important.

8.1.1. Telling time and date

Times and dates are closely related subjects, so we'll treat them in one go. We've already looked at time for a bit in the counter section, where we discovered that time counters and duration counters are two different things, leading us to guess at how to properly tell time, but let's review these particles in a more specific setting of actually telling time. The Japanese time format can be represented either in a 'before noon'/'after noon' system or using the 24 hour clock, but unlike the regular concept of '24 hours', the Japanese clock can go beyond the number 24. For instance, a TV show that's on at 1:20 in the early morning, airs at 25:20 in Japan. Using this time indication it is easier to tell to which day for instance a particular programme belongs - something that's airing at 1:20am on a Friday is actually airing "Thursday, 25:20", so still part of the Thursday planning.

Going back to actually telling time rather than remarking on the Japanese system, the time format in Japanese is similar to the western system, namely first listing the hour, then minutes, then seconds. For instance:

ごじ　にじっぷん ごじゅうびょう
五時二十分 五十秒
5:20'50"
(5 o'clock, 20 minutes and 50 seconds)

As mentioned in the counters section, the a.m. and p.m. indications in Japanese are done using 午前 and 午後, but these precede the time indication:

ごご　　にじはん　　き
午後の二時半に来ます。
[I] will come at 2:30 p.m.

Two things to note here are that の is optional. It can be left out, in which case the statement is slightly less formal. In fact, the whole 午前/午後 indication is optional, since typically it will be obvious whether you mean in the morning or in the afternoon. The other thing to note is the use of the suffix 半 (はん) which indicates "half". In Japanese, adding this indicates an additional half hour (unlike some western languages where this means removing half an hour from the time):

ななじはん
七時半
7:30

This is of course the same as saying 七時三十分, but using 半 is shorter. Unlike some western languages Japanese doesn't have indicators for the quarters before and past the hour. Instead, it has a "before" and "after" marker if the time is anywhere from 10-ish minutes before the hour to 10-ish minutes past the hour, 前(まえ) and 過(す)ぎ respectively. Literally, 前 means "before" or "in front of", and 過ぎ is the noun derived from the verb 過ぎる, "to be past [some conceptual point]". Two examples of their use are:

> もう四時十分過(よじじっぷんす)ぎだよ。まだ待(ま)つのか。
> It's already 10 past 4, are we still going to wait?

> その番組(ばんぐみ)は一時五分前(いちじごふんまえ)に始(はじ)まります。
> That programme will start 5 (minutes) to 1.

But telling time alone isn't everything. If you don't want to use 午前 or 午後 you can also say whether you mean in the morning, afternoon, evening or night, by using the nouns 朝(あさ), 昼(ひる), 晩(ばん) and 夜(よる) respectively:

> 毎朝(まいあさ)七時(ななじ)に家(いえ)を出(で)ます。
> [I] leave the house every morning at 7.

The prefix 毎, as you may remember from the outline, is a prefix used to indicate 'every ...' and is used here to indicate frequent behaviour rather than just a single event. When instead you want to specifically refer to "this" morning, afternoon, evening or night, the words to use are 今朝(けさ), [nothing], 今晩(こんばん) and 今夜(こんや) respectively. There's no real reason why there is no word for "this afternoon", but there just isn't any. Instead, 今日(きょう) meaning "today" is typically used. Also notice the readings for 'this morning' and 'this night', which are different from what you might expect. This is due to specific readings for kanji being used in specific word combinations.

If we want to be more specific, we might add a date to the time we're stating. The Japanese format for this is "biggest counter first", leading to the format era-year-month-day-(day by name)-hour-minute-second. The era bit is important here, as the Japanese calendar doesn't actually correspond to the western calendar. While the Japanese will use the Gregorian calendar when convenient, the "proper" Japanese way to count years is to name the Era to which you're referring, and then count the number of years since its epoch. Since these are reasonably important to know, the list of most recent era is as follows:

- The 平成(へいせい) era is the current Era, which started in 1989 and will last until emperor Akihito passes away.
- The 昭和(しょうわ) era was the era before the current era, running from 1926 till 1989

- The 大正(たいしょう) era is the last most recent era still covering the 1900's, running from 1912 till 1926
- The 明治(めいじ) era is the first of the "recent" eras, starting at the Meiji restoration in 1868 running till 1912

The numbering for eras is reasonably intuitive: the first year of an era is the year the era started. Thus, "大正 1" corresponds to 1912, and "昭和 30" corresponds to 1955. If we write out the full date for when this section was written, we see:

> 平成十七年五月二十四日(の火曜日)二時十九分五十五秒
> Heisei 17 (2005), may 24th (Tuesday), 2:19'55"

This is a valid way to write it, but typically it saves writing work to use numerals instead, which is perfectly allowed:

> 平成１７年５月２４日(の火曜日)２時１９分５５秒

It might also be a good idea to list the days while we're at it. The Japanese week is as follows:

日曜日(にちようび)	"sun day of the week"	Sunday
月曜日(げつようび)	"moon day of the week"	Monday
火曜日(かようび)	"fire day of the week"	Tuesday
水曜日(すいようび)	"water day of the week"	Wednesday
木曜日(もくようび)	"wood day of the week"	Thursday
金曜日(きんようび)	"metal day of the week"	Friday
土曜日(どようび)	"earth day of the week"	Saturday

While many of the western days of the week derive their name from Norse mythology (more specifically, the names of the gods), the Japanese - as well as several other Asian countries - use the elements for their day naming. When using day-series such as "mon-wed-fri" in English, the Japanese use the day kanji, but with slightly different pronunciation:

> 月水金(げっすいきん) mon-wed-fri
> 火木土(かあもくよう) tue-thu-sat

The thing to notice is that the short days, Tuesday and Saturday, get their sound lengthened to two syllables, so that the pronunciation length for each day is the same. Also, contractions occur when pairing 月 with 水, because of the つ in the pronunciation for 月.

This should cover enough for telling time and dates, which means we can move on to where numbers really matter: maths.

8.1.2. Doing maths

One of the most funky things you can do with numbers is turn them into other numbers applying such wonderful operations as "addition", "subtraction", "division" and "multiplication". These four operations sum up the basic mathematical operations one can perform on numbers, and covers what most people consider enough when it comes to doing math. While of course explaining all mathematical operations is slightly beyond the scope of this introduction on Japanese syntax and grammar, aside from these four basic concepts I'll also tell you how to do a few more complex mathematical things just in case you simply want to know. Before we start on those though, the basics:

8.1.2.1. Addition

Addition is the root of anything math. The idea of addition is a childishly simple one: you have something, you get more, you have more. The mathematical part of this concept is to determine how much more you have, and for this we need three things: numbers, something that states addition, and something that marks an outcome. Luckily (though not unexpectedly) Japanese has all three of these. Numbers we have already seen plenty of, the outcome marker is simply です, and the verb that we use for addition is 足(た)す.

However, the way in which we use this verb is somewhat uncharacteristically western. Where a western addition would be "1 + 4 = 5", the Japanese addition is actually nearly the same, stating "1 + 4, 5 is":

> 一(いち)足す四(よん)は五(ご)です。
> One plus four is five.

You might think that this is a strange verb use, but remember that a 連体形 also acts as attributive. The phrase 一足す四 can be interpreted to mean "a one-added four", just like 大(おお)きい四 is "a big four". We can also use 足す on its own, for such obvious things as:

> 二十円(にじゅうえん)を足(た)せばちょうどにする。
> If [you] add 20 yen that'll make it [a] round [number].

8.1.2.2. Subtraction

Of course, we can do the same thing using subtraction instead of addition, by using 引(ひ)く instead of 足す:

三百(さんびゃっく) 引く 五十三(ごじゅうさん)は 二百四十七(にひゃくよんじゅうなな) です。
300 minus 53 is 247.

Coming up with a similar argument for why this pattern isn't actually strange for this verb doesn't work. It is strange. There's no sensible reason why this actually means 300 minus 53 rather than 53 minus 300, other than "being consistent in respects to 足す and western maths".

8.1.2.3. Division

Division in Japanese is done in the same way as in western math, but the phrasing is somewhat confusing if you don't pay attention: in western math, "three seventh" means 3 * 1/7. Likewise in Japanese, the indication for 3/7 is to separately mention 3, and 1/7, but the order is changed, so instead of saying "three seventh", in Japanese you say "seventh's three":

七分(ななぶん)の三(さん)。
3/7

This uses the genitive の to link 三, 3, as genitively belonging to 七分, 1/7th. One thing to note here is that this use of 分, ぶん, is the reason why the counter series for minutes has an oddity for three, where ふん becomes ぷん instead of ぶん:

三分(さんぷん)
three minutes

三分(さんぶん)の一
one third

8.1.2.4. Multiplication

A final simple operation is multiplication, which uses the noun 倍(ばい). This is actually a rather interesting word, because on its own it means "two fold", such as for instance:

問題(もんだい)が倍になった。
[Our] problems doubled.

Interestingly, this noun can also be used in combination with other numbers (except one of course) to indicate any random multiplication:

五倍(ごばい)の七(しち)は三十五(さんじゅうご)です。
7 times 5 is 35.

Here, the literal statement is "the five-fold of seven is 35". This is the basic multiplication, but there's also another word that's used for the x-fold for one through ten involving the counter 重, pronounced in various ways this role:

一重	二重	三重	四重	五重
ひとえ	ふたえ	みえ	しじゅう	いつえ
いちじゅう	にじゅう	さんじゅう		ごじゅう

七重	八重	九重	十重	幾重
ななえ	やえ	ここのえ	とえ	いくえ
しちじゅう		くじゅう		
		きゅうちょう		

You may notice this is perhaps the most bizarre counter series the language has; There is no count for 6, the counter itself has three different readings, has a mix of possible native Japanese and Chinese readings for the numbers, and the native reading used for 10 is a very rare one, not to mention the question word uses 幾 instead of 何. Needless to say this counter series is "special". In fact it's special in that it's a mainly literary counter for "-fold", where it depends on the context which reading is used. In eloquent language, え is more likely, and in technical literature じゅう will be used more.

This short diversion into a literary counter also wraps up the section on simple math, and leads us to the more advanced topics in math.

8.1.2.5. More advanced math

While there are many topics that we could treat here, this isn't a book on math in Japanese. Treating all mathematical topics would take up too many pages, and would for the most part be rather boring. Instead, we'll look at a few "simple" less basic math constructions before moving on to 'real' grammar like comparisons and interpersonal language.

8.1.2.5.1. Raising power and taking roots

Raising numbers to a power in Japanese uses the counter 乗(じょう), and is used in the following way:

七(しち)の 三乗(さんじょう) は 三百四十三(さんびゃくよんじゅうさん) です。
Seven to the power 3 is 343.

The inverse for this operation is taking the n-root, which is done with the 'counter' 乗根(じょうこん), which is just the counter for raising power paired with the noun for root:

四十九(よんじゅうきゅう) の二乗根(にじょうこん)は七(しち)です。
49's square root is seven.

8.1.2.5.2. Squaring and cubing

There are two special words for squared and cubed, 平方(へいほう) and 立方(りっぽう), which are used to indicate square units and cubed units respectively. For instance when indicating something is 500 square kilometres, one would say:

500 平方キロ(メートル)です。
[It] is 500 square kilometer.

If one wanted to say a particular car had a 12 cubic meter interior, one could say:

中身(なかみ)は 12 立方メートルです。
The interior fits 12 cubic meter.

That's it, that's all the math you will probably care to know of how to work with, so let's leave the numbers for what they are and move on to more linguistic constructions.

8.2. Comparisons, preferences and choice

Comparing and choosing are two very related subjects. Making a choice is essentially the same as making a subjective comparison, where one thing is more favourable than the other. This concept is quite obvious in Japanese, where we encounter two types of choices: the binary choice, and the open choice.

8.2.1. Binary choices

The binary choice is simply a choice between two things. One's preference can swing one way or the other, or one can indicate that either choice is fine, or both are to be rejected. This binary choice concept in Japanese uses the word 方(ほう) for this construction in the following pattern:

[A] と [B] と [どちら/どっち] の方が [some judgement call] ですか。

Note that this uses a two-item inclusive list, with either two と particles, or a comma after the second choice item (though typically commas are avoided). Because of the use of どちらの方 or どっちの方 (the first being more formal than the second) this pattern literally asks "A and B; which direction is [more] [something]?" and can be applied to virtually anything:

バーガーとチキンサンドとどちらの方が好(す)きですか。
Which do [you] like best, hamburgers or chicken sandwiches?

電車(でんしゃ)とバスとどちらの方が速(はや)いですか。
Which is faster? The train or the bus?

Remember that adjectives in Japanese act both as normal predicate as well as comparative, so the translation for this last line for instance could be both "which one is fast, the train or the bus?", but it is far more likely that the speaker means "which one is faster" because of the fact that a choice is being offered.

There is always the possibility that the answer to this question is "both" or "neither", which use the same word in Japanese, どちらも or どっちも followed by a positive or negative evaluation (recall this from the question pronouns + も), or alternatively the noun 両方(りょうほう) meaning "both [options]" suffixed with も:

A: 音楽(おんがく)のジャズとクラシックとどちらの方が好きですか。
B: どちらも好きです。
C: どっちも別(べつ)に好きじゃないよ。
D: 両方も分(わ)かりません。

A: Which music do you like best, jazz or classical?
B: I like either.
C: I don't particularly like either.
D: I don't know either two.

8.2.2. Open choices

If you want to have a larger collection of items to choose from, or you want to ask a categorical choice, then 方 cannot be used. Instead, a choice pattern involving ...の中(なか)で, meaning "from amongst ..." is used for this type of open choice. This pattern can be used for anything, such as specific lists of items, or just categorical nouns asking for the person who is offered the choice to pick something that falls into the category. For instance:

A: 音楽(おんがく)の中で何(なに)が好きですか。
B: そうですね。ジャズが好きです。

A: Music wise, what do you like?
(lit: from music, what do you like?)
B: Hmm. I like Jazz.

This is an example of a categorical choice where the respondent actually gives a specific answer. Questions like "What food do you like", "which cars are fast" and

the like all fit this pattern. There is an exception to this pattern, where の中で is replaced with just で, which involves open choices for locations, such as "Which cities in Europe have you been to". Due to で already being a marker for locations, the の中 part is dropped:

ヨーロッパでどんな都市(とし)に行(い)った事(こと)がありますか。
Which cities in Europe have you been to?

Similar to the binary choice, it might be that none of the choices are good, or that they're all equally fine. Instead of using どちらも/どっちも/両方も, for this particular pattern 何も/何でも are used, to indicate 'everything' or 'nothing' depending on the verb form that follows being positive or negative:

A: 食(た)べ物(もの)の中で何(なに)が美味(おい)しいですか。
B: 特(とく)に何も美味しくないと思(おも)う。
C: 何(なん)でも美味しいよ。

A: Which foods are tasty?
B: I don't think there's anything particularly tasty about food.
C: Everything's tasty!

8.2.3. Comparison through likeness

There are several ways in which to compare two concepts to each other, with varying degree of certainty in the comparison, and varying nuance in the exact way the likeness works. You have already seen some ways such as そう and 様(よう) in the verb and particles sections, but there are at least 6 more, which will be treated here.

8.2.3.1. そう

As mentioned in the verb and verbal adjective sections, the noun adjective そう paired with a verb 連用形 or verbal adjective stem is used to create the construction of "appearing to be at the point of ..." or "seems to be ... [to the speaker]"

仕事(しごと)が出来(でき)そうですね。
It looks like [you]'ll be able to perform this job.

温(あたた)かそうです。
It seems warm.

Remember that for いい / よい and ない the そう impression forms are よさそう and なさそう respectively.

8.2.3.2. 様(よう)

Also as previously mentioned, using the noun adjective よう with a 連体形 creates a conceptual likeness, relating two manners to each others.

> 聞(き)かないようにして下(くだ)さい。
> Please act like you didn't hear that.

A special use of this comparison marker is with the こそあど series この/その/あの/どの:

> このように - in this manner
> そのように - in that manner
> あのように - in that manner like so
> どのように - in which manner

In this use its principle meaning is equivalent to こう/そう/ああ/どう, except that the series with 様 are adverbial constructions while こう/そう/ああ/どう are pronouns, making them less suited for indicating a manner or way in which something is done.

> どのようにしていいですか。
> How should [I] do it?

8.2.3.3. 風(ふう)

The noun adjective ふう, like よう, likens something to a particular manner. It closely translates to way/style, and this meaning is evident in words like 当世風(とうせいふう) meaning "modern" ('the now-a-day style') or 良風(りょうふう) , "good customs" ('good style').

A special set of words with this comparison marker is for the こそあど series こんな/そんな/あんな/どんな:

> こんな風に - in this way/style
> そんな風に - in that way/style
> あんな風に - in that way/style like that
> どんな風に - in which way/style

This is similar to このように…どのように, but differs in that it emphasises a particular way or style more than that it sets up a likeness.

そんな風に見(み)ないで下(くだ)さい。
Please don't look [at me] like that...

8.2.3.4. みたい

When commenting on a (visual) impression, the noun adjective みたい is used directly after 連体形 clauses. For instance:

疲(つか)れてるみたい(です)ね。
It looks likes [he]'s tired, doesn't it.

It should also be noted that みたい typically replaces だ/です in a sentence:

硬(かた)いです。
It's hard.

硬いみたい(です)。
It looks hard.

The です in parentheses the example sentences are optional. Adding them will make the statement more polite, but leaving it off doesn't create a very impolite sentence.

8.2.3.5. らしい

When rather than visual impression, a guess is ventured, the suffix らしい is used. Using らしい is similar to using 様 (よう) in terms of certainty, except that らしい doesn't liken to manner, but to impression, and like みたい replaces だ/です:

この本(ほん)は山田君(やまだくん)のらしい(です)。
It seems that book is Yamada's.

8.2.3.6. 的(てき)

This is a noun adjective that is used primarily as noun suffix to create "-ly"/"-al"/"-ive" nouns for comparisons, such as:

基本的(きほんてき), "basically", from 基本(きほん) meaning "basis".
実際的(じっさいてき), "practical", from 実際 meaning "the way things are now".
主体的(しゅたいてき), "subjective", from 主体 meaning "subject", "constituent".

These comparative nouns are used like normal noun adjectives for comparisons:

基本的につまらないでしょう。
It would basically be uninteresting.

8.2.3.7. っぽい

This noun suffix is very much like the English "-ish":

君子(きみこ)さんって男(おとこ)っぽいですよね。
Kimiko's kind of a tomboy isn't she?

This sentence literally reads "Kimiko's man-ish, don't you think?"

この料理(りょうり)がフレンチっぽいと思(おも)わない？
Don't you think this food tastes kind of French?

This sentence literally reads "Don't you think this food is French-ish?"

8.2.3.8. 同(おな)じ

Using ...と同じです is the strongest comparison that can be made, as it doesn't so much liken to objects, but explicitly claims they are the same. The noun 同じ is an adjective-derived noun, but has come from the adjectival stem rather than from the 連用形.

この部屋(へや)は隣(となり)のと同じです。
This room is the same as the neighbouring one.

The 連用形 of the old adjective 同じい, 同じく, is also still in use today though:

A: 大学(だいがく)の二年生(にねんせい)の石田(いしだ)です。
B: 同じく、植松(うえまつ)です。

A: I am Ishida, 2nd year university student.
B: I am Uematsu, also a 2nd year university student

Of course, B literally says "I am Uematsu, the same", but unlike in for instance English, it is not impolite in Japanese to omit this contextually already present information, since Japanese is a language in which context is presumed to remain known throughout a conversation.

8.2.3.9. 勝(が)ち

Closely related to likeness, the noun adjective がち is used to compare something in the "prone to" way. While a noun adjective, there are some instances where がち can be used with の as well, such as:

> 妹(もうと)が病気(びょうき)がちの人(ひと)です。
> My (younger) sister is someone who's prone to illness.

However, there are no clear rules on when one can use の, so typically it's best to stick with using がち as a noun adjective.

For verbs and verbal adjectives, this suffix is added to the 連用形:

> この時計(とけい)は進(すす)みがちだ。
> This clock tends to run fast.

8.2.3.10. 似(に)る

A final way to indicate likeness is by using the verb 似る meaning "to resemble" or "to be similar". Typically used in -ている form, this verb is used in combination with the particles と or に, where the choice of particle determines the nuance of likeness. Using と makes the statement describe near-exact likeness:

> その考(かんが)えは私(わたし)のと似ています。
> Those ideas are like the ones I had.

> 金(きん)は色(いろ)が真鍮(しんちゅう)と似ている。
> The colour of gold is [sort of] the same as brass.

Using に, on the other hand, makes the statement describe general likeness, or a likeness in a particular (but non-specified) way:

> 母親(ははおや)に良(よ)く似ている。
> [She] really takes after [her] mother.

> その山(やま)はアヒルに似てるな。
> That mountain [kind of] resembles a duck, doesn't it?

8.3. Interpersonal

One of the things that seems much more important in Japanese than in a lot of western cultures, is having proper interpersonal skills. Even something as simple as addressing someone too formal or too familiar can create a bad basis for a working relationship, and so this deserves special attention. The next few sections will deal with how to properly address people of different social status, how to properly indicate giving and receiving between parties of differing social status, and once more look at using the humble/honorific speech pattern.

8.3.1. Addressing people

8.3.1.1. Name suffixes

There are various name suffixes that indicate different kinds of social relations, and using them out of place can have the effect of sounding like you're joking around a bit, to simply insulting someone. For this reason, it's a good idea to go over the list of common name suffixes, and see what they do. Also not unimportant is to note that people in Japanese refer to each other by their family name, suffixed with the appropriate name suffix, and not by first name until there is a clearly defined friendship.

8.3.1.1.1. -さん

This is the standard name suffix that is used across Japan to refer to and call the attention of people who you have no particular relationship to.

8.3.1.1.2. -様(さま)

An honorific suffix, this name suffix is used when someone is of considerably higher status, used to indicate a master in a master/servant relation. This suffix is also used when writing someone's name as recipient on a letter or card, where it can be followed by へ to indicate that this name is to be the recipient of the communiqué.

8.3.1.1.3. -殿(どの)

A classical honorific suffix, that is in use today principally for formal addressing in writing. Like 様, 殿 can be used on letters and cards for indicating the recipient.

8.3.1.1.4. -氏(し)

This name suffix is used to indicate that someone is a representative of a specific house or has a particular lineage, similar to the official English title "sir" or "distinguished gentleman". Historically this name suffix has only been used for

men, as women did not act as representatives of a house, and this gender specific use has not changed to date.

8.3.1.1.5. -先生(せんせい)

Someone who is referred to with 先生 is not necessarily a teacher by profession. For instance, a doctor is a 先生, as is a school teacher, a lawyer, or an expert on politics. When someone is called upon for their knowledge, then in this role they are addressed with 先生.

8.3.1.1.6. -ちゃん

While typically associated with little girls, -ちゃん is actually an affectionate suffix. It can be used for boys, girls, men and women alike, but only when there is a relation between the speaker and person whose name is suffixed with ちゃん that is close and/or amiable. While it can be used for anyone, it does deserve mention that it is indeed used for women more than for men.

8.3.1.1.7. -君(くん)

This suffix is an amicable suffix, similar to ちゃん, but has a slightly different connotation. While ちゃん finds it origin in young children who cannot say さん yet, and thus is readily associated with little kids and other cute things, 君 doesn't actually come "from" anything, but is a word on its own, also used to mean "junior", both in the naming sense as well as the social hierarchy system. While still being used for this, it's also picked up the added meaning of being a suffix used amongst equals who have an amicable relationship.

8.3.1.1.8. 呼(よ)び捨(す)て

This is not so much a suffix as the complete opposite: the practice of 呼び捨て refers to calling someone by just their last name, without any suffix, and the word refers to discarding (捨てる) the formalities when calling (呼ぶ) each other.

8.3.1.1.9. Nicknames

A final, drastically different, approach is to come up with a nickname for someone based on their name, a habit, some personal feature, or whatever random thing you can think of that might make good material for a nickname. This practice is fairly obviously reserved for close relationships.

8.3.1.2. Family

Terms used for family members differ depending on whether one is referring to their own family or someone else's. Typically one refers to ones own family at a level below that which is used for other people's family. This may vary per

person and their upbringing, similar to how some people will call their parents "mom" and "dad", and some will actually call them "mother" and "father" when addressing them. The following list should thus be considered the "standard" accepted version, and what people use in real life will invariably differ from this list depending on the speaker:

	one's own family	*another person's family*
family	家族(かぞく)	ご家族(かぞく)
household	家(うち)	お宅(たく)
father	父(とう)さん	お父(とう)さん
	父(ちち)	父親(ちちおや)
mother	母(かあ)さん	お母(かあ)さん
	母(はは)	母親(ははおや)
parents	両親(りょうしん)	ご 両親(りょうしん)
	親(おや)	
older brother	兄(にい)さん	お兄(にい)さん
	兄(あに)	
older sister	姉(ねえ)さん	お姉(ねえ)さん
	姉(あね)	
younger brother	弟(おとうと)	弟(おとうと) さん
younger sister	妹(いもうと)	妹(いもうと) さん
siblings	きょうだい	ごきょうだい
brothers	兄弟(きょうだい)	
sisters	姉妹(しまい)	
uncle	おじ(さん)	おじさん
aunt	おば(さん)	おばさん
cousin	いとこ	いとこさん
nephew	甥(おい)	甥(おい)ごさん
niece	姪(めい)	姪(めい)ごさん
grandfather	祖父(そふ)	おじいさん
	じいさん	
	じじ	
grandmother	祖母(そぼ)	おばあさん
	ばあさん	

	ばば	
grandchild	孫(まご)	お孫(まご)さん
husband	主人(しゅじん)	ご主人(しゅじん)
	夫(おっと)	
	だんな	だんな
wife	妻(つま)	奥(おく)さん
	家内(かない)	
son	息子(むすこ)	息子(むすこ)さん
		坊(ぼっ)ちゃん
daughter	娘(むすめ)	娘(むすめ) さん
		お 嬢(じょう) ちゃん
children	子供(こども)	子供(こども)さん
		お子(こ)さん

It should be noted that there are four ways to write "siblings", and four ways to write "cousin" in Japanese. きょうだい can be written either as 兄弟, 姉妹, 兄妹 or 姉弟, if one wants to make a distinction between the gender of the elder sibling(s) and younger sibling(s), with 兄弟 being the kanji form used when there is nothing known about the age or gender of the siblings. Similarly for cousins on paper the following four forms exist: 従兄, 従姉, 従弟 and 従妹, standing for an older male cousin, an older female cousin, a younger male cousin or a younger female cousin respectively.

8.3.1.3. Social setting

What to call each other depends on social setting as much as it depends on your relation to someone. Even if you normally call your sister by her nickname at home, if you happen to both be working in the same company then you will never address her by her nickname at work. It's simply not done. Usually when one is in a social setting such as work or school, the best thing to do is just address people by their family name suffixed with さん. However, for people above you, like teachers or bosses, instead of using the suffix さん it is customary to use their title instead. Thus, a teacher should be addressed with 先生(せんせい), and a section chief should be addressed with 部長(ぶちょう).

There is one last pair of words that should be mentioned here, and that's the pair 先輩(せんぱい) / 後輩(こうはい). A 先輩 is someone who, in your social setting, stands above you in rank or position, and whose implicit role it is to give the right example, and

guide you for as long as this social difference exists. Similarly, a 後輩 is someone of lower rank or position who is being cared over by a 先輩. The 先輩 / 後輩 concept can be found everywhere that one finds a hierarchical structure, such as work, school, clubs, or any other organisation where there are ranks of some sort or another.

8.3.2. Suggesting and recommending

Another interpersonal skill to have is making suggestions or recommendation on what others should do. This isn't an unimportant skill to have, as a suggestion brought one way might be considered pushing unwanted criticism onto someone, while another might be considered merely raising a possible course of action without further saying whether this course of action is actually good or bad.

8.3.2.1. Recommending, using past tense + 方がいい

Using a verb in plain past tense paired with 方がいい creates a construction that essentially says "It would be better if you [verb]". This kind of recommendation is fairly direct, and thus some care must be taken in making sure that the relation you have to whoever you make a recommendation to allows for this level of directness.

A: 遅れてたから彼女に嫌われてる。どうしよう。
B: まあ、謝った方がいいだろう？

A: [My] girlfriend is angry with [me] because [I] was late. What should [I] do?
B: Well, wouldn't it be sensible (lit: good) to apologise [to her]?

8.3.2.2. Offering your opinion using -ば

Using a hypothetical conditional paired with your own opinion on how good or bad this situation would be is a less direct way to suggest a course of action to someone. For instance:

A: しまった。間違いばっかり書いてた。
B: 直せばいいでしょう。

A: Oh no, I've been writing mistakes all over the place.
B: Well, it won't be that big of a deal if you just fix them?

This is still a reasonably opinionated way of offering a suggestion, but is less direct than the previous past tense + 方がいい.

8.3.2.3. Asking about an option using -たらどう

A final way to offer a suggestion is to simply offer it and then don't make any judgement calls on it yourself, effectively leaving the process of determining whether it's a good idea or not entirely up to the listener:

> A: どれほど勉強(べんきょう)してもこれが分(わ)かりませんよ。
> B: そうですか。じゃあ、先生(せんせい)に聞(き)いたらどうですか。
>
> A: No matter how much I study I don't seem to understand this.
> B: Hmm. Well, what about asking the teacher?

This is the most polite way of actually making a suggestion because it only stays at making the suggestion, without adding a personal recommendation to it, effectively deciding for the other person.

8.3.3. Giving/doing for someone

In Japanese, the idea of giving something to someone, or doing something for someone, use the same construction, and thus are considered effectively the same thing. However, this doesn't make things simpler in terms of less constructions, since giving (or doing for) in Japanese uses different verbs depending on who's doing the giving to who, and the social relationship between the giver and receiver.

8.3.3.1. giving in a low-high social relation: 上(あ)げる

When giving occurs between a given and receiver where the receiver is placed higher than the giver, the verb 上げる is used. The kanji already suggest an upwards action, and on its own this verb can also mean "to raise". 上げる can be used to indicate giving from first person (me) to second person (you), second person (you) to third person (him/her), or first person (me) to third person (him/her).

> 私(わたし)はそれを母(はは)に上げました。
> I gave that to my mother.

In this sentence, 母 is the indirect object of the verb 上げる, so it gets marked with に. This is the most basic full pattern featuring the person giving, the person receiving, and the object that's being given. However, because of the fact that 上げる already indicates a certain relation has to exist when it is used, it can also narrow down the possible giver/receiver relation without an explicit giver and receiver:

これを上げました。
[I] give [her] this.

If the conversation contextually allows for either "me" or "my mother" to do the giving, the fact that "my mother" will always stand on a higher social platform than I will in relation to her means that the only possibility is that I gave something to my mother, and not the other way around.

When used in a verb て + 上げる form, this construction can be used to signify "giving [someone] the act of [verb]", i.e.: "do [verb] for [someone]":

昨日(きのう) 妹(いもうと) の友達(ともだち)にご飯(はん)を作(つく)って上げました。
[I] made dinner for my (younger) sister's friends yesterday.

Here the act of making diner is "given", which in most western languages uses the original verb and a preposition denoting "for". The use of 上げる indicates that the speaker is not on familiar terms with the friends of her sister, but considers them out-group people. When giving to someone who is part of your out-group and you want to be formal polite, use 上げる.

8.3.3.2. Giving in a high-low social relation: 下(くだ)さる

When giving goes the other way, where the giver is of a higher social status than the receiver, 下さる is used. This can be from third person (him/her) to second person (you), from second person (you) to first person (me), or from third person (him/her) to first person (me).

先生(せんせい)が漢字(かんじ)を教(おし)えて下(くだ)さった。
The teacher taught [us] kanji.

Again the indirect object is indicated using に:

松本先生(まつもとせんせい)が 私達(わたしたち) に漢字を教えて下さった。
Mrs. Matsumoto taught us kanji.

Because of what 下さる does, it should now be clear why the polite request construction て+下さい is a polite request: it really does literally mean "please do ... [for me]".

8.3.3.3. Giving in an equal social relation: くれる

When giving occurs between people where there is no notable social difference between the giver or receiver, くれる is used. However, くれる can only be used like 下さる, indicating giving from 3rd to 2nd, 2nd to 1st or 3rd to 1st:

岩谷(いわたに)さんにノートが貸(か)してくれたんだ。
Iwatani loaned me [his] notes.

Note that this technically does not translate to "I borrowed Iwatani's notes", since this would imply that Iwatani was somehow made by you to hand them over, which is counter to the concept of being given something. Rather, that would be receiving instead.

8.3.3.4. Giving to things not on the social ladder or very informal amongst equals: やる

Finally there is the verb やる, which in 'standard' Japanese signifies giving to things not on the social ladder, like buying a new toy for your baby brother, feeding your pets or watering a plant, as well as (in very informal setting) being usable for giving amongst equals in the same direction as 上げる. While this technically makes 上げる/やる as pair correspond to 下さる/くれる as pair, be very careful not to use やる as if it's the counterpart to くれる: in normal Japanese this verb is only used for things that don't have a spot on the social ladder!

子供(こども)に新(あたら)しいおもちゃを買(か)ってやりました。
[I] bought the kids new toys.

Because やる also means "to do" (in every possible connotation), this verb is considered very rude as it literally says "do ..." instead of also standing for "give ..." - This difference between 上げる, 下さる and くれる on the one hand and やる on the other makes it a verb to avoid unless you know why you're using it.

8.3.4. Receiving/having someone do for you

Receiving in Japanese is intimately related to having something done for someone. This means that receiving in Japanese always has an element of the receiver in some way causing the act of giving. Because of this, the verbs for receiving are more widely used than you would think, where in every situation where someone effected something, a receiving verb can be used. For instance "I liked your book so I linked to it on my web site" can use a receiving construction because the speaker took the liberty of putting the link up. This kind of "taking" is also considered receiving in Japanese, albeit a form of receiving without an actual party to do the giving - something that's a foreign concept in most western languages. There are two verbs for receiving, both being used to indicate 3→2→1 receiving, with as only difference that the first of the two is less formal than the second:

8.3.4.1. 貰(もら)う - Plain receiving

When indicating receiving, having something done, or taking the liberty of doing something that you'd otherwise need permission for, もらう is used:

> 先輩(せんぱい)に直(なお)してもらったんだ。
> [I] had [my] sempai fix it.

This sentence indicates that the sempai in question fixed the item in question either upon request, or upon implicit request such as indicating the item was broken without actually asking for it to be fixed. An example of the "taking the liberty" use of もらう is:

> A: 誰(だれ)のリンゴですか。
> B: 恵子(けいこ)のよ。
> A: そうか。
> [A takes an apple]
> A: なら、一個(いっこ)もらうわ。
>
> A: Whose apples are these?
> B: Oh, they're Keiko's
> A: I see...
> [takes apple]
> A: Well then, I'll take one.

This conversation between two women shows A taking the liberty of helping herself to an apple, under the assumption that while an impertinent act, it would have probably been okay if 恵子 had been there to ask whether she could take one anyway.

8.3.4.2. 頂(いただ)く / 戴(いただ)く - Humbly receiving

While a more humble form, it's still usable for all three roles that もらう is used for, meaning that it can also be used to indicate taking a liberty.

> この記事(きじ)を見(み)ていただきたいんですが、よろしいでしょうか。
> [I] would like [you] to look over this article [for me], would that be okay?

This is a very careful and formal sentence, literally saying "[I] would like to receive [your] looking at this article, [I] wonder if this is acceptable [to you]".

> おじさんの中古車(ちゅうこしゃ)をありがたくいただき、車(くるま)を持(も)つ人(ひと)になった。
> [I] gladly accepted [my] uncle's used car and became a car owner [myself].

Here いただく has been made even more humble by adding the adverbial form of the adjective ありがたい, literally meaning "hard to accept" but interpreted to mean "humbly", "with careful reserve", etc.

There is a colloquial effeminate alternative to using いただく, using the noun 頂戴(ちょうだい) instead. This noun is actually formed with the kanji for both versions of いただく, and is used in the exact same way as いただく:

> 電気(でんき)をつけて頂戴。
> Turn on the lights for me, please?

8.3.5. Telling people what to do

A last thing that is important in regards to interpersonal skills is being able to tell people what to do. Asking for permission, telling people to open a window or commanding someone to get out of the way are important skills to have, some of which require simple constructions like using a verb in 命令形, while others are slightly more complex, requiring verb inflection, particles and specific adjectives.

8.3.5.1. Asking / giving permission

An extension of giving and receiving in general, is giving and receiving permission to do things. In Japanese, asking or giving permission is done by placing the act for which permission is asked for or given in て form to create an open sentence, and adding the particle も followed by either いい (good), or in very formal setting 宜(よろ)しい (literally meaning well, proper or agreeable), asking "is it okay to ..." or saying "it is okay to ..." depending on whether permission is asked for or given.

Typically, in a permission asking and giving dialogue, the verb action is only used in the request, such as in the following example:

> A: 座(すわ)ってもいいですか。
> B: はい、いいですよ。
>
> A: May I sit down?
> B: Certainly.

It may sometimes also be the case that permission for something is given without a request. If we use the previous dialogue as a basis, we can imagine that for instance a head master of a school gives a student permission to sit down during an interview:

座ってもいいですよ。
[You can] sit down.

While the translation here suggests a commanding form, this is more a limitation of English than anything. It is the kind of "sit down" generally associated with someone extending an arm to a chair in a fashion that informs the listener that a hospitality is being offered.

Colloquially, the も can be dropped to create a more informal way to ask or give permission.

8.3.5.2. Instructing and commanding

This unprompted form of giving permission is essentially a form of instructing someone to do something, for which there is a shorter form possible involving just the て form of a verb:

ああ、美嶋君(みしまくん)、どうぞ上(あ)がって。
Ah, mr. Mishima, please come in.

The どうぞ in this sentence translates to "by all means", and is a very important word when politely instructing people to do things. Together with どうか ("somehow") these two words are quite important to know. どうぞ makes an instruction softer, while どうか adds more plea to a request:

上がって。
Come in.

どうぞ上がって。
Please, come in

連絡(れんらく)して下(くだ)さい。
Please get in touch [with us].

どうか、連絡して下さい。
Please [do whatever you can to] get in touch [with us].

Of course when there is no other way but to issue an order of some sort, any commanding form will do, as long as the proper levels of humility, honorifics and or plain and polite forms are taken into account. The easiest of these is to issue a direct order:

早(はや)くしろ。
Hurry up.

A good way to issue a more indirect instruction or order is to issue a statement that illustrates what happens if the listener will not do what the speaker says:

早くしないと遅(おく)れるぜ。
If you don't hurry up, you're going to be late.

While the speaker doesn't actually tell the listener to hurry up, it is apparent from the illustration of what will happen that an implicit command to hurry up is being given. This type of speech is quite common in Japanese, and we will look at it in detail in the next section.

8.4. Indirect speech

One of the important things in using Japanese is to be indirect whenever possible in formal situations. This entails asking indirect questions instead of direct questions, making indirect suggestions instead of telling people what they should do according to you, and stating assumptions rather than stating truths, even if they are truths. This section will explain how to turn direct speech into indirect speech, and for which constructions this is easily done.

8.4.1. Expressing hearsay

One way to state something indirectly is by making explicit the fact that you only heard or read something somewhere, rather than being something you yourself believe or know. This is done using the noun adjective そう, in combination with a clause in 連体形:

あの人気(にんき)なグループが解散(かいさん)する。
That popular group will disband.

あの人気なグループが解散するそうだ。
I hear that popular group will disband.

While the first sentence implies that the speaker is certain of the stated fact, the second sentence states the information more carefully, stating that it seems the case that something is a fact, based on having heard or read it somewhere. This indirect form of stating something can only be done for second hand information, and should never be used to soften a statement that isn't actually hearsay.

8.4.2. Negative questions

Asking a negative question is in many languages a way to politely ask someone to do something. For instance, "won't you join us for dinner" is an English phrase that has as implied meaning "please join us for dinner" instead of "do not join us for dinner". In Japanese the same applies:

また遊(あそ)びに来(き)ませんか。
Won't [you] come over [for a social visit] again some time?

Here 遊ぶ is not used to mean "play" but "to spend time leisurely", hence the implied clause "for a social visit".

A more polite way to ask negative questions is to use the て form with the negative of 下さい:

お茶(ちゃ)を飲(の)んで下(くだ)さいませんか。
Won't [you] have some tea?

These negative questions can also be formed with plain negative form, but they become more informal that way:

ケーキを食(た)べない？
Won't you eat cake?

Giving answers to negative questions can trip up beginning students quite easily, as the following example illustrates:

A: 一緒(いっしょ)に行(い)かない？
B: はい。

A: Wont you go [with me]?
B: Yes [I won't go with you].

The problem lies with the fact that an affirmative answer to a negative question, affirms the negative. Usually it is easier to answer with what you will be doing, rather than a form of yes or no:

A: 一緒に行かない？
B: 行きます。

A: Wont you go [with me]?
B: I will.

An even better solution is to express your opinion when a negative question is asked:

A: 一緒に行かない？
B: 暇(ひま)だし、行きますよ。

A: Wont you go [with me]?
B: [I'm] free [anyway], [so] sure, I'll go [with you].

8.4.3. Suggestions and assumptions

As mentioned in the verb 未然形 section on the pseudo-futurum, ましょう and でしょう can be used for three things, namely the dubitative, cohortative and presumptive. These last two are ideal for use in indirect speech, as they guess at the world and leave the conclusions or decisions based on these guesses up to the listener instead of imposing them onto the listener:

> 今日(きょう)寿司(すし)を食(た)べに行(い)こうか。
> Shall [we] go out for sushi today?

This question leaves the decision up to the listener, which is typically a polite thing to do, unless of course you're dealing with someone who cannot deal with making decisions, in which case using indirect speech is arguably not a good idea anyway.

> このコンピュータが故障(こしょう)してるのは、古(ふる)いからでしょう。
> The reason this computer's broken is [probably] because it's old [right?].

In this sentence the speaker assumes that the computer in question is old, and leaves the matter of whether this assumption is correct up to the listener to decide, thus not providing potential disinformation to the listener. Of course, this is an over-analysis, and these forms aren't actually so much used to prevent disinformation as just used because indirect speech is polite.

8.4.4. Uncertainty

There will also be times when you are uncertain of whether or not something will happen, or is the case. When this happens, there is a nicely simple statement that can be used to indicate this, namely [clause]かどうか分(わ)かりません:

> 今年(ことし)は落(お)とすかどうか分かりません。
> I don't know whether or not I'll make this year's grade.

The way this is formed is very simple. The clause about which uncertainty is to be expressed is followed by かどうか, which is basically the double question mentioned in the particle section for か, creating (essentially literally) "[clause] or what?" The final verb then comments on the fact that it's not clear which of the two choices are actually to be picked.

> 今年は落とす。
> [I] will fail this year.

今年は落とすかどうか。
Will [you] fail this year or...?

今年は落とすかどうか分かりません。
[I] don't know whether [I] will fail this year or not.

8.5. Common phrases

Every language has its set phrases for things like thanking people, or phrases that mean something other than what the words imply such as the expression "take a chair" being used to mean "please sit down". This final section lists common Japanese phrases, and per phrase gives the grammatical decomposition that can be made given all the material that has been presented in this book, ordered the Japanese way (starting at あ through お and ending at ん).

あ　　くだ
上がって下さい - "Please come in."

Coming from the verb 上がる (あがる), this sentence literally says "please be raised". Its non literal meaning comes from the fact that the traditional Japanese house has a raised floor at the entrance, where one takes off ones shoes and steps up, into the house itself.

ありがと　ご ざ
有難う御座います - "Thank you"

As mentioned in the adjective section, this is an example of classical adjective pronunciation, and is actually a long chain of conjugations:

> ある in 連用形 + がたい (難い) in classical pronunciation + ござる in 連用形 + ます
> あり + がとう + ござい + ます
> ありがとうございます

This literally means "this is a difficult thing to accept", stemming from the concept of becoming indebted to someone who helps you. As becoming (further) indebted to someone is always a hard thing to accept, this phrase is used instead of a separate word for thanking.

There are various ways to use this sentence, the most indebting being どうもありがとうございます, which adds the word どうも to the phrase, meaning "in all possible ways", coming from the question pronoun どう (how, in what way) and the generalising pronoun suffix も.

Still formal indebting is ありがとうございます, or the "informal" but still polite どうもありがとう.

Just ありがとう, however, is not polite. It comes down to saying "thanks", and pays improper respect to people who do something for you and are of higher social status. Never just say ありがとう to your teacher for instance. Always use ありがとうございます.

いけない - "oh no", "this won't do".

This word is often used to express that something will not do, is about to be done wrong, or is at this very moment going wrong. It's technically the short potential form of 行く, 行ける, and literally means "this cannot go". Used in this way it's typically written in hiragana only.

頂(いただ)・戴きます - Said when one is about to eat

This statement literally means "I will accept [this]", in the receiving meaning of accept and is used when one is about to eat in the company of others. This is similar to for instance the Christian practice of giving thanks for the food about to be received, but without the religious aspect.

When one is done eating, one uses ごちそうさまでした to indicate that one is done.

行(い)って来(き)ます - "I will go and come back"

This is said when one leaves a place that one expects to come back to. The most obvious example is when one goes off for one's job or school in the morning, when it is used to say goodbye to whoever's still in the house. The standard reply, if warranted, is いってらっしゃい.

いって(い)らっしゃい - Said when someone who will return, leaves.

Literally this is the honorific version of the command 行って来て (いってきて), "go and come back", where the speaker tells the listener to go on their business and come back afterwards. This phrase is said to people who are leaving a place where they are expected to return, such as their house, typically in response to 行ってきます. The first い in いらっしゃい is typically omitted after a て form, similar to how the い in いる is typically omitted when use with the て form.

いらっしゃいませ - "Be welcome"

This is literally the commanding form of the honorific verb いらっしゃる, and is use by tenants to welcome their customers into their place of business. It doesn't technically mean "be welcome", but that's what it's come to be considered to mean.

かえ
お帰りなさい - "Welcome back"

This phrase is the typical response to ただいまい, and welcomes someone back home, or back to a place that can be considered a base of departure, such as your office, when you went out for a power meeting with management and have returned unscathed.

This phrase is technically the honorific commanding form of 帰る, to return [to some base]:

> お + 帰る in 連用形 + なさる in 命令形
> お + 帰り + なさい
> お帰りなさい

かげさま
お 蔭様 で - "Thanks to you"

This phrase is a typical reply to the question お元気ですか (how do you do), when it is preceded by an affirmative such as はい, or is used when someone is praised by someone who may in some way have contributed to what you are being praised for. Traditionally, a 陰 means "shadow" or "shadow figure", used to stand for someone who does not work in the limelight, but is an unseen driving force behind other people. Literally, saying お蔭様で means "due to your being like a shadow", and can be interpreted as "because of [your] acting as a background force, [I am where I am now at this moment]".

げんき
お元気ですか - "How are you?"

This is a terribly misused phrase by people who start to take an interest in Japanese, who mistakenly take it to mean "hello".

お元気ですか literally asks "are you 元気", which asks whether someone is feeling good about things in general. This is something you do not ask someone every day, but only when you haven't seen someone in a while, or when there is a reason to ask them, such as when someone has just recovered from an illness. In this last case the question is typically もう元気ですか, asking "are you 元気 again already?".

元気のない人, people who are not 元気, are typically depressed, gloomy, glum, down and out, and for all intents and purposes a mood killer for everyone around them. Asking these people whether they are 元気 is a bit like driving home the point that they aren't happy with a big pointy stick, so instead the phrase 元気ないみたいですね is typically used, carefully remarking "you do not seem very 元気 do you" instead.

お先(さき)に - Said when leaving early

Said when leaving earlier than you normally would (namely when everyone else leaves), お先に literally says "before [you/everyone else]" and is short for お先に行(い)ってきます. This can be met with two responses, namely either a set phrase such as お疲れ様(つかれさま)でした or ご苦労様(くろうさま)でした, or with surprise at the act of leaving early for no clear reason.

お邪魔(じゃま)します - Said when entering someone's house

The noun 邪魔 means obstruction or interference, and this sentence is a particularly good example of Japanese formality: this phrase is used when one is invited into a house. Courtesy demands that you indicate that even though you have been invited, you will intrude upon their home life by accepting this invitation by entering their house.

Because this phrase literally means "I'll be intruding" it can also be used when one really is intruding, such as breaking up an intimate conversation because you need to talk to one of the conversationalists, or when barging in on people.

お世話(せわ)になります - To be taken care of

世話 means caring, in the givable caring kind of way. Paired with the verb なる, to become, the combination 世話になる means "to be taken care of by someone" in the positive sense. For instance, when someone is offering to do something for you like pay the bill after dinner or take care of you when you're sick and you wish to oblige them, you use the phrase お世話になります to indicate that you will be taken care of in some way by them.

Combined with する, the roles are reversed, in that you are the one who will be doing the caring: the caretaker performs the 世話 (する), the care taken becomes cared for (なる)

お大事(だいじ)に(して) - "Take care"

大事 is a "valuable thing", in the figurative sense. When someone is told お大事にして下(くだ)さい, they are told to "please act in a way so that they are treating themselves as something valuable". This full sentence is often shortened to just お大事に.

For instance, when saying goodbye to someone who you will not see in a while, you typically wish them お大事に so that you may meet them again in good health at some point in the future.

つか　さま
お疲れ様です/でした - "You've worked hard"

お疲れ様 literally means "the appearance of tiredness", and comes from the noun form of the verb 疲れる, "to tire", prefixed with the honorific お and suffixed with the more classical likeness suffix 様 (さま). This statement is used when someone has performed a tiring job, or when one goes home after a day of working.

なか　す
お腹が空きました - Being hungry

One states that one is hungry by saying their stomach has become empty. Variations on this theme are the plain past tense instead of formal past tense お腹が空いた or with the subject marker omitted, お腹すいた. Colloquial versions are 腹(はら)が減(へ)った (note the different pronunciation for 腹) or simply 腹減った.

ねが
お願いします - "Please"

Literally this phrase reads "[I] wish it", but is commonly interpreted as meaning "please", coming from the verb 願う, to wish:

> お + 願う in 連用形 + する in 連用形 + ます
> お + 願い + します

はよ
お早うございます - "Good morning"

This phrase doesn't actually contain the word "morning" in any way, which explains why it's possible to use this phrase at later points in the day. Literally, this is the statement 早いです, only in humble classical form:

> 早い in classical form + 連用形 of ござる + ます
> おはよう + ござい + ます

This statement basically affirms that some meeting is reasonably early for when it occurs. For school goers, 8:30 am could be early, for bookmakers, 1pm could be early. It all depends on when your daily routine day starts.

ひさ　ぶ
お久し振りです - "It's been a long time"

This phrase is actually grammatically quite interesting as it consists of the noun compound formed of the verbal adjective 久しい, "long (timed)" and the verb 振る, "to end/give up", which as compound is turned into a noun and prefixed with the honorific お:

お + 久しい as 語幹 + 振る in 連用形 (suffering from a voiced pronunciation as compound) + です
お + 久し + ぶり + です
お久し振りです

This phrase is used when a silence between two people is broken after some time, either in writing or by actually seeing someone again.

おめでとうございます - Congratulations

Literally this phrase is a combination of めでたい (meaning auspicious) in classical form paired with ござる:

お + めでたい in classical form + ござる in 連用形 + ます
お + めでとう + ございます

やす
お休みなさい - "Good night"

This phrase is said when one goes to bed, and is repeated by those who wish you a good night. It's technically the honorific commanding form of 休む, to rest, and is used to wish everyone else a good night too.

お + 休む in 連用形 + なさる in 命令形
お + 休 + みなさい

くろうさま
ご苦労様(です/でした) - "Job well done"

Literally, this phrase doesn't say "well done" at all, but actually translates to "it would appear that you have exerted considerable effort", 苦労 (くろう), with the fact that this was actually "good" effort only being implied by the fact that you're not being told you've done a bad job instead. This phrase can be used whenever someone has finished doing a tough job, or has had a rough day.

This phrase is also used as a reply to お先(さき)に, when used by someone for who it's okay to leave work before others do (even if only by a few minutes).

Colloquially the 様 in ご苦労様 can be replaced with さん, to create the more relaxed sounding ご苦労さん.

ちそうさま
ご馳走様(でした) - Said when one is done eating.

This expression has no usable translation because it's a customary saying. Literally this phrase means "it was a feast", stemming from the noun 馳走 (ちそ

う) which means banquet and all the things a banquet entails such as good food and decent entertainment, and the likeness suffix 様 (さま).

This phrase is the counterpart to the customary saying いただきます, said prior to consuming anything in the company of others.

めんくだ
ご免 下さい - "Please excuse me"

This phrase is used in two common settings. The first is when hanging up on a phone conversation when you are the one hanging up, and the second is when you're entering a place of which you know it's someone else's, but you don't see anyone around. Literally 免 means dismissal, and this phrase asks for the listener to please dismiss your behaviour as it is intrinsically rude.

めん
ご免なさい - "Please forgive me"

This construction is more oriented towards asking for forgiveness rather than just being excused. When you have done something wrong, and you know you did, apologise with ごめんなさい.

This phrase is also used to turn down important offers, where the act of turning down the offer may lead to problems for the other party (such as when someone is depending on you, or when someone confesses their love for you).

こんにち
今日 は - "Good day"

This is the particle は (pronounced わ), added to the noun 今日 meaning "day" (pronounced こんにち instead of きょう). It's technically an unfinished phrase just raising the topic of "today" and then saying absolutely nothing in regards to it, but this has become the standard way to say "good day" in Japanese.

こんばん
今晩 は - "Good evening"

Like こんにちは, this is just は added to 今晩, "this evening".

さようなら - "Farewell"

Realise the full meaning of this word before you use it: さようなら is short for 左様(さよう)ならばお暇(いとま)を申(もう)します, which is old Japanese for "if such be the case, then I shall speak my farewells". The modern version too really does mean "farewell" and not just a plain "good bye". There is a very explicit connotation that it will be a considerable time until the speaker will see the person it is spoken to again, if at all.

しかた
仕方がない - "There is nothing [I/he/she/we] can do about it"

This phrase is quite often (and to the horror of many a translator) translated literally as "there is no helping it". Now, the number of times you will hear this phrase used in English is probably a very small number indeed, and as such this phrase is much better translated with "there's nothing [I/he/she/we] can do about it".

仕方 is a conceptual noun for a "something that can be done", and is an example of kanji being applied to a reading instead of the other way around: this is actually the "way of doing" construction for する, し方, where し has been given the kanji 仕, meaning doing/service.

Variations on this theme involve omitting が, 仕方ない, or replacing し方 with the more humble 致(いた)し方, and ない with the more polite ありません, leading to statements such as 致し方がありません.

しつれい
失礼 しました - "I have committed a rudeness"

This is used as an excuse after the facts, when admitting that one has committed a rudeness and is apologising for it.

しつれい
失礼 します - "Excuse me"

失礼 literally means "a rudeness", and 失礼する means to commit a rudeness. When one has to excuse oneself from somewhere, for instance when one is talking to a superior and is called away for some reason, or one has to go before the conversation is truly over, this expression is used, in combination with the appropriate level of bowing, to indicate that one is aware that one's actions will be somewhat rude.

じゃあ、また - "See you again later"

This phrase is an unfinished phrase that literally means "well then, again [some other time]", and is used as an informal goodbye when you expect to see each other again soon. The じゃあ comes from では, which in turn is short for それでは meaning "with this" or "by this" as context. また (又) means "again", and so the whole sentence can be unwrapped to それでは、また[...], where the final part of the sentence can be things like 明日(あした), "tomorrow", 後(あと)で, "later", and so forth. Because of all this dropping of terms, there are several statements that can be used which all mean the same thing, but in varying levels of formality:

それでは、また後で。	formal polite
では、また後で。	formal polite
では、また。	casual polite
じゃあ、また。	informal
じゃ、また。	informal
またね。	very informal

す
済みません - "Thank you", "Excuse me"

A prime example that Japanese conceptualises certain things differently, すみません can actually mean "thank you" and "excuse me" at the same time when used. While meaning a simple "excuse me" used when for instance bumping into someone in the street, it is also used when someone does something for you that will indebt you to them, such as catching your hat and handing it back if the wind catches it, or fixing some typos on a page you had written. Using すみません in these instances means both "thank you for doing this for me" as well as "I'm sorry to have caused you to do this for me" at the same time.

This is technically the polite negative of 済(す)む, "to end", indicating that the debt between the two parties involved in the act that required the すみません does not end after this. Variations on the theme include the more colloquial すいません and very informal すまない and すまん.

そうですか - "Is that so?", "Really", "I see", "Aha", "Hmhm"

This is a typical phrase that doesn't mean what it seems to mean, even if half the time it does. Much like how half the time when someone Japanese says はい they won't mean "yes" but are only indicating they're listening, そうですか is used to acknowledge that the speaker is still being listened to just as much as it's used to genuinely ask "is that so?". Only the context of the conversation is an indicator whether it's just a polite way to show that someone is still being listened to, or whether the listener is genuinely wondering about something said.

どうした - "What happened"

Being a combination of the pronoun どう, "how/in what way" and the past tense of する, this literally asks "by what way did [...] happen", but is interpreted to mean "what happened" instead. It's a short question to enquire what happened when someone seems upset, or taken aback, or generally like something happened that's unusual. A more formal way to ask this, though also more effeminate, is どうかしましたか.

どうして(ですか) - "Why", "How come"

This is the combination of どう, "how", and the verb する in て form. Using just どうして is technically an incomplete sentence, and implies that it should be finished with whatever verb best describes the situation that is being questioned. For instance, if someone refuses to help, the full sentence could be どうして手伝(てつだ)わないんですか, "why won't you help?", but just saying どうして is enough to act as question.

どうぞよろしく - "Pleased to meet you"

This is actually the "best cultural approximation" translation. The sentence doesn't actually mean "pleased to meet you" at all, but relies on knowing what よろしく means. Being a noun derived from よろしい, "agreeable/acceptable", this statement literally says that the speaker hopes that everything that is the result of this meeting is of a good nature. It's only used once, when you first meet someone, and is more accurately described as saying something that lets the listener know they are asked to treat the speaker well in the future.

The more formal version is どうぞよりしくお願(ねが)いします, which adds the verb for "wishing" to the statement, thus expressing that the speaker sincerely wishes to be treated favourably in the future.

The short form, just よろしく, can be used in a broader setting to indicate you will leave something to someone under the assumption that all will be well.

なぜ(ですか) - "Why"

This is the most direct version of "why", and is a pure interrogative; it's short, and literally means "what reason". Being the most direct, it's also quite rude, and there is no polite way to use this word, so it's best to try and avoid using it at all. Because it is technically a noun, it can be used in a softer form using です, being なぜですか, but even then this is still considered more direct than asking the other two versions of "why" with です: 何(なん)でですか or どうしてですか.

何(なん)で(ですか) - "Why"

This particular version of "why" is considered more direct than どうして, but less direct than なぜ. It is indirect in that it literally asks "by which means [do you reason this way]" or "by which means [did this situation arise]", but is more direct because it's shorter than どうして and thus sounds more curt.

のど　かわ
喉が渇いています - Being thirsty

When one is thirsty in Japan, one doesn't say "I am thirsty" but instead uses the less direct statement "my throat is dry", similar to how one could say "I am bit parched" in English rather than saying "I'm a bit thirsty".

はじ
始めまして - A formal greeting used when meeting someone for the first time

Like どうして, this is technically an unfinished sentence, being the polite て form of 始める, "to start" (transitive). Literally this sentence reads "[through our meeting, something] starts ...", which is why it is only used once in your life per person you meet. This sentence is typically followed by どうぞよろしく or よろしくお願(ねが)いします, depending on the whether you will be potentially relying on the other person a lot.

はら　た
腹が立つ - Getting upset

This phrase literally means "to raise [my] stomach", and is used to indicate something causes genuine upset or upset anger. Like being hungry or thirsty, being upset too is typically indicated by describing the physical feeling.

もう　わけ
申し訳ありません - Extreme apology

Literally this phrase reads "[this is not a situation in which] saying [something] [is appropriate]". Effectively it means "I have no excuse [for what I have done]" and makes it clear that the speaker is genuinely at fault for something. Grammatically decomposing the phrase we see:

申す in 連用形 + meaning/reason nominaliser 訳 + formal polite negation of ある
申し + 訳 + ありません

Variations on this theme involve more or less form versions of the verbs "to say" and "be", such as 申し訳ない, 言(い)い訳ない, 申し訳ございません, etc.

もしもし - Said when picking up the phone.

The story goes that this word was used because demons cannot pronounce it, and it would allow people to tell whether a real person had picked up the phone on the other end. Regardless of whether it's true (it's not, もしもし comes from 申(もう)し申し), it makes for a nice story to tell people when they get curious about the phrase that the Japanese use when they pick up the phone, or when it appears the signal has dropped during a conversation.

This phrase is also used to call someone's attention when they seem to be lost staring into the distance, similar to how one might yell "helloooo?" to someone in English.

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This book was written in several phases, using several programs. The first full-content version was written in plain text using the Textpad 4.73 (http://www.textpad.com) text editor. I used a plain text editor mainly because it's the easiest way to scratch and re-add stuff without having to spend hours on getting it all to look stylish again. The second phase was to wrap this plain text content in XML, in the form of a DocBook. Initially I had intended on wrapping it using a stand-off mark up system, so that the content itself would still be easily editable, but after discovering the free XMLmind XML Editor (http://www.xmlmind.com) standard edition, I let go of this idea, as this was essentially a DocBook editor which allows editing as if you're working in a normal word processing program.

The reason I went with DocBook, but more specifically with XML in general, is that XML has a special conversion language written for it, XSL, which lets you turn XML data into literally anything. In my case, I wrote a script to convert DocBook XML to WordprocessingML, a version of XML that Microsoft Word (http://www.microsoft.com/office) writes and reads, so that I could do the final styling in a program that would let me see what my pages actually looked like, before converting to PDF form using Adobe's Acrobat PDF building tools (http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat).

All in, the writing of this book took less time than it took to actually mark up, convert, proof and stylise. I must admit being quite pleased with the result, and I will be quite happy to hear from anyone who has any questions or comments in regards to either the content, or the process of writing it.

Glossary

Abstraction - Turning something from a reference to something that can be found in the world into something that exists detached from it, such as for instance abstracting the physical act of "moving" to the abstract concept of "motion", or abstracting the physical concept "friend" to the abstract concept "friendship".

Accent - Accent in speech is that part of a word that seems to jump out at the listener, placing more focus on one of more syllables than the rest of the word. For instance, the word "attention" has its accent on "ten" in English, while the accent lies on "on" in French.

Accusative - Used in this book to refer to a word or part of phrase that comes over as accusing the listener. The grammatical accusative role is rather different, referring to the role of direct object to a word that can take such direct objects (typically verbs).

Active - The verb form that describes actions taking place in the world. For instance "I throw the ball" describes an activity performed by me, and describes a change to the ball in terms of having gone from some state to being thrown. Contrast to "passive".

Adverb - Words that are used to describe the way in which a verb action or state is in effect. For instance, "To walk quickly" has the adverb "quickly" describing the way in which "walking" is performed.

Affirmative - A word or part of phrase that states ("asserts") a truth or correctness. This is a fancy way of saying "something that is […]". Contrast to "negative".

Animate - The quality of things that allow us to say they "have life". This can mean that the object referred to is actually alive, but it can also refer to things which posses a "lively" quality, such as an animate conversation. Contrast to "inanimate".

Article - A particular kind of word that references particular objects. In English these are the indeterminate articles "a" and "an" and the determinate article "the".

Assertive - Bold, confident, or even aggressively self-assured.

Attributive - Attributing a particular quality to something. For instance, used attributively the word "blue" in the phrase "The blue book", attributes the quality "blue" to the object "book".

Auxiliary verb - A verb that is used to give additional meaning to another verb. For instance in the English phrase "I can do this", the verb "can" is an auxiliary verb, combining with "do" to form a potential form, rather than a plain predicative form.

Binary - Anything in which only two choices can be made, such as binary signals (high and low), binary numbers (zero or one) or any arbitrary choice (one or the other). Notice that no choice is ever truly binary, since there is always the choice to not pick either, and sometimes even allowing both to be picked, thus making binary choices secretly ternary choices, and sometimes even quaternary choices.

Cardinal - A cardinal number differs from a normal number in that it refers to a number belonging to a particular set. Contrast this to ordinal numbers, which indicate a number is part of some sequence. As example, if we have a collection of 10 marbles marked 1-10, then the marble with number 6 written on it has as cardinal number 6. However, if we the look at in which order we can take the marbles out of some container and the marble with 6 on it is the first to be pulled out then its ordinal number is 1, but its cardinal number is still 6.

Clause - A group of words that contain a subject and a predicate, but not forming a full sentence.

Cohortative - A word form or form of phrase that suggests to the listener or reader to perform some action.

Colloquial - Spoken conversation, usually used to mean the informal spoken version of a language, as contrasted to formal language.

Commanding - A word form or form of phrase that commands the listener or reader to perform some action. Contrast to "prohibiting".

Comparative - A word form or form of phrase that compares one of more things to each other in some way.

Compound - A word that has been formed by combining two or more words.

Conditional - A word form or form of phrase that indicates some particular event will occur upon some condition being true. There are various forms of conditionals, with varying degrees of generality and strength, such as the universal conditional, which is always true regardless of when it is stated, or the hypothetical conditional, which does not even rigidly guarantee what it states as event will actually occur once the condition for it is met.

Conjugation - A particular inflection of a verb or verbal word.

Conjugational bases - Japanese verbs have five "base forms" for verbs, and four "base forms" for verbal adjectives, which are used conjugate them to their various possible forms.

Conjunctional - A word form that indicates it consists of two or more parts that have been joined in some specific way to effect a new word, or word that fulfils a different role than its separate parts.

Connotation - The idea expressed by a word or phrase rather than its literal meaning. For instance, "take a chair" connotes sitting down. Contrast to "denotation".

Context - All the text surrounding a particular sentence or word, which is used to determine its meaning. For instance, without context it is impossible to say what "This led to frustration" means. If the surrounding text concerns a group of people, frustration will likely refer to personal feeling, but if the surrounding text concerns some experimental setup, frustration will likely refer to the setup has become unreliable.

Contraction - The phenomenon that certain parts of speech get shortened by either dropping syllables or deforming them. An example of this in English is the word "cannot" being turned into "can't". In Japanese an

example is なければ being turned into なきゃ.

Contrasting - Showing two things as being different in one or more respects. The biggest contrast is polar contrast, where two things are presented as opposites, rather than merely differing.

Copula - A word or part of phrase used to define things. In English this is the verb "to be", which is used in definitions such as "The sky is blue". In Japanese, these are the two words だ and です for informal and formal copula respectively.

Counter - A word used to indicate that a particular number is to be considered a counting statement regarding some thing or concept, rather than a plain numerical value.

Decomposition - Reducing compounds to their individual parts.

Deferred - Indirect

Denotation - The literal meaning of a word or phrase. For instance, "take a chair" denotes actually physically taking a chair, and nothing else. Contrast to "connotation".

Derogative - A word or phrase that suggests someone or something is worth less than they really are. Belittling, detracting, expressing low opinion of.

Desirative - A word or phrase that expresses desires.

Direct - Not hiding one's true intentions behind suggestive words or formality patterns, "speaking one's mind". Contrast to "indirect"

Direct object - That part of phrase that receives the action of a transitive verb. For instance, in "I throw a ball" the word "ball" as direct object receives its action from the verb "throw". Contrast to "indirect object", compare to "subject".

Discourse - A text or conversation of such length that at least one context is established throughout it.

Distal - Impersonal.

Dominant - That which is most important. Contrast to "subordinate".

Dubitative - A word or part of phrase that expresses doubt about some matter.

Effeminate - A word or part of phrase that is associated with being used predominantly by women. Contrast to "masculine".

Emphatic - A word or part of phrase that places emphasis on a matter.

Existential - Refers to something being considered to exist as either a concrete or abstract thing.

Familiar speech - A speech pattern used when talking to people who you are intimately acquainted with.

Formal speech - A speech pattern used when talking to people who you are not intimately acquainted with. Contrast to "informal speech".

Formality - A particular behavioural pattern used for the sake of procedure or decorum.

Future tense - A verb tense that indicates that something will occur in the future. In English this uses the

auxiliary verb "will", in Japanese this tense does not explicitly exist.

Genitive - Expressing a word or part of phrase belongs to, or is specified by, another word or part of phrase. From the Latin "genitus", meaning "begotten".

Gerund - The form of a verb where it is written as verb, but interpreted as being a noun. For instance, in the sentence "I like whistling" the verb "whistling" acts as gerund, as it can be replaced with any other noun while staying a valid sentence. Do not confuse the gerund with a verb's "ing" form, which is nothing. Just because a verb ends on "ing" does not mean it is a gerund; more often this is actually a present progressive such as in "I went driving to school".

Gerundive - A verb or verb phrase that that can be used as noun.

Glottal stop - A stop consonant, formed by briefly closing the glottis while attempting to speak anyway, followed by opening the glottis to let the pressure come out.

Glottis - The opening between the vocal cords at the upper part of the larynx.

Grapheme - A collection of strokes that form an identifiable part of a kanji. All kanji on themselves are inherently graphemes.

Habitual - An act that is performed regularly, or some state that is regularly the case.

Hepburn - A phonetic romanisation designed by devised by the Reverend James Curtis Hepburn for his Japanese/English dictionary published in 1867.

Hiragana - The cursive Japanese sound script

Honorific - A form of language in which one raises the perceived status of subjects.

Humble - A form of language in which one lowers ones own projected status.

Imperative - A word, part of phrase or full phrase that expresses a command or plea. Contrast to "prohibiting".

Imperfect - A verb form expressing that some action has not (yet) been performed, or some state is not (yet) the case.

Implication - Suggesting without proof that something is the case.

In group - The group of people that in a particular setting are considered part of the same group that you are part of. The in group is a dynamic concept, and people who are part of one's in group in one setting need not automatically be part of one's in group in another setting. Contrast to "out group".

Inanimate - Those things that do not "have life". For real objects this can mean that they are either dead or never had life to begin with, or for concepts can mean they do not posses a "lively" quality. Contrast to "animate".

Indirect - Hiding one's true intentions by using suggestive phrasing and formality patterns. Contrast to "indirect"

Indirect object - Those parts of phrase that indirectly receive the action of a transitive verb or are described as state by an intransitive verb. For instance, in "Throw the ball to me", "me" is an indirect object to the verb "throw". There can be more than one indirect object. Contrast to "direct object", compare to "subject".

Inflection - Modifying the form of a verbal word to indicate its grammatical role.

Informal speech - A speech pattern used when talking to people who you are familiar or intimately acquainted with. Contrast to "informal speech".

Instrumentalis - A part of phrase that is used to indicate actions are performed by some indicated means. For instance, "We went to school by car" has the word "by" acting as instrumentalis.

Intangible - Not being perceivable by any of the five physical senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch). Contrast to "tangible".

Intelligible - Something that can be understood.

Interpunction - The use of punctuation marks in written language to structure sentences.

Intimate - Close or personal association or acquaintanceship,

Intonation - The way something is pronounced in terms of tonal progression.

Intransitive - A verb category that indicates verbs belonging to it describe states of (part of) the world, rather than actions that take place in it. Contrast to "transitive".

Intuit - Using one's intuition to determine what is going on.

Irregular verb - A verb that conjugates in a manner that does not follow the usual rules of conjugation.

Kana - The collective term for hiragana and katakana.

Kanji - The Japanese version of Chinese characters. Note that not all kanji exist in the Chinese character set, and not all Chinese characters exist in the Japanese character set.

Katakana - The angular Japanese sound script.

Kunrei - Short for "kunrei shiki", this is a syntactic romanisation scheme developed by the Japanese cabinet and officially in use in its current form since 1954. However, both in and outside of Japan it is not as popular as the phonetic Hepburn romanisation.

Masculine - A word or part of phrase that is associated with being used predominantly by men. Contrast to "effeminate".

Mimesis - A word that illustrates an aspect of the sensible world. An example is the Japanese "kira kira" which represents a sparkling or intermittently shining state. Compare to "onomatopoeia"

Modifier - A word or part of phrase that modifies or narrows down the definition of another word or part of phrase.

Negation - Turning an assertion from being true to being false.

Negative - A word or part of phrase that states ("asserts") a falseness or invalidity. This is a fancy way of saying "something that is not […]". Contrast to "affirmative".

Nominaliser - A word or part of phrase that changes the grammatical role of other words or parts of phrase into the one played by nominals.

Nominalising - Turning a word or part of phrase into a nominal

Nominals - The class of words that act as nouns.

Noun - A word class that is used to name a person, place, thing, quality, or action.

Noun adjective - A word that can be used both as a noun on its own, or as an adjective when linked to other words.

Onomatopoeia - A word that Illustrates a sound made by something, such as the word "thunk" in the phrase "The rock when 'thunk' as it hit he floor". Compare to "mimesis"

Operative - A word that is used to illustrate that something is in effect, or that something is being affected somehow.

Particles - A class of words that are used to characterise words or parts of phrase as having a particular grammatical role.

Part of phrase - See "part of speech".

Part of speech - A word or collection of words that act as a single grammatical entity inside a phrase.

Passive - The verb form that describes some state of (part of) the world, rather than some action taking place in it. Contrast to "active".

Perfect - A verb tense that indicates the action described by the verb has been completed.

Personal zone - Refers to the conceptual locations available for referencing to. In English there are two personal zones, namely "near me" and "not near me", leading to the pronouns "here" and "there" or "this" and "that" respectively. In Japanese there are three personal zones, namely "near me", "near my conversational partner(s)" and "not near either of these two", leading to the kosoado words "koko", "soko" and "asoko" or "kore", "sore" and "are" respectively.

Phonetic - Having to do with the way language is pronounced.

Pitch - The main identifiable frequency at which something is pronounced.

Plural - The word form used to indicate multiple instances.

Postposition - A word that is added after another word or part of phrase to indicate its relation to the rest of the phrase. Contrast to "preposition".

Potential - Indicating that some state or action is possible.

Predicative - Attributing a particular quality to objects or concepts.

Prefix - Something that is added to the front of a word to change its meaning in some way. Contrast to "suffix".

Preposition - A word that is added before another word or part of phrase to indicate its relation to the rest of the phrase. Contrast to "postposition".

Present tense - The verb tense that indicates some state is the case, or some action is taking place, at this moment.

Presumptive - Expressing a belief about some matter without full evidence to support the belief.

Progressive - Something that occurs in the world without having lead to a passive state yet. For instance "the window is opening" is a progressive, where the resultant state will be "the window is open".

Prohibiting - Forbidding something. Contrast to "imperative" and "commanding".

Pronoun - A word that takes the place of a noun in a sentence and refers to this replaced noun instead.

Pronunciation - The way language sounds when spoken.

Pseudo-futurum - A verb form that is not a true future form, but has certain aspects of it. In Japanese the pseudo-futurum does not indicate a future tense, but is only used when some verb may turn out to describe a state in the world or an action taking place in it at a later time, such as a cohortative, dubitative or presumptive.

Quantification - Expressing something as a quantity, either in numerical values or conceptual quantities such as "a little" or "a lot".

Radical - A kanji that can be used to index and look up other kanji with. There are 214 of these radicals, called the "classical radicals", but many of these have one or more variations when used as grapheme in larger kanji, leading to roughly 400 graphemes being used as radical.

Reserved speech - A form of speech where one exercises self-restraint, trying to keep one's thoughts and ideas to oneself, instead stating matters as impersonal possibility or fact.

Resultant state - A state describing (part of) the world, that comes from a certain action having been performed. For instance the act of opening the window leads to the resultant state of an open window.

SOV - A linguistic category for languages, indicating that in the full formal language model sentences follow a subject, object, verb order, such as Japanese. This category is purely descriptive, not prescriptive.

Stem - The part of a word that does not change when it is inflected.

Sub-phrase - A section of a phrase that can act as a phrase on its own.

Subject - The nominal in a phrase or part of phrase that performs a transitive verb action or that is described by an intransitive verb. Compare to "direct object" and "indirect object".

Subordinate - That which is less important. Contrast to "dominant".

Suffix - Something that is added to the end of a word to change its meaning in some way. Contrast to "prefix".

Superlative - The word that express the highest level of some quality. English superlatives are “best”, “most”, “highest”, “largest”, “quickest”, etc.

SVO - A linguistic category for languages, indicating that in the full formal language model sentences follow a subject, verb, object order, such as English. This category is purely descriptive, not prescriptive.

Syllabaries - The set of written characters of a language of which each character stands for a syllable.

Syllable - A unit of spoken language, consisting of a single uninterrupted sound.

Syntax - The collection of rules that dictate how words are combined to form grammatical sentences

Tangible - Being perceivable by any of the five physical senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch). Contrast to “intangible”.

Tonal progression - The way pitch changes during pronunciation.

Topic - On the sentence level, the word that describes information previously mentioned that the rest of the sentence bears relation to. On the discourse level, topic is the same as “context”.

Transitive - A verb category that indicates verbs belonging to it describe actions taking place in the world. Contrast to “intransitive”.

Transliteration - The act of writing out a language in another language, without translating it.

Verbal - Relating to verbs

Verbal adjectives - Words that act as adjective, but can be inflected to show tense and mood.

Verbs - Words that describe a particular state of (part of) the world, or actions taking place in it.

Voicing - Vocalising sound while having air pass through the vocal chords.

Volitional - Making a conscious choice or decision.

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